



# Saurashtra University

Re – Accredited Grade 'B' by NAAC  
(CGPA 2.93)

Sapovadia, Soniya F., 2006, " Woman in Tagor's novels - A critical study ",  
thesis PhD, Saurashtra University

<http://etheses.saurashtrauniversity.edu/1035>

Copyright and moral rights for this thesis are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study,  
without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first  
obtaining permission in writing from the Author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any  
format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title,  
awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Saurashtra University Theses Service  
<http://etheses.saurashtrauniversity.edu>  
repository@sauuni.ernet.in

© The Author

# **WOMAN IN TAGORE'S NOVELS**

## **- A CRITICAL STUDY**



**A  
THESIS  
SUBMITTED  
TO  
SAURASHTRA UNIVERSITY,  
RAJKOT  
FOR THE AWARD OF**

*Doctor of Philosophy*

**IN  
ENGLISH**

Supervised by :  
*Dr. K. H. MEHTA*

Professor &  
Incharge Head,  
Smt. S.H. Gardi Institute of  
English and Comparative Studies,  
Saurashtra University,  
Rajkot (Gujarat)

Submitted by :  
*SONIYA F. SAPOWADIA*

Lecturer,  
Smt. K.S.N. Kansagara  
Mahila Arts & Commerce College,  
Rajkot (Gujarat)

2006

# **WOMAN IN TAGORE'S NOVELS - A CRITICAL STUDY**

**A  
THESIS  
SUBMITTED  
TO  
SAURASHTRA UNIVERSITY,  
RAJKOT  
FOR THE AWARD OF  
*Doctor of Philosophy*  
IN  
ENGLISH**

Supervised by :  
*Dr. K. H. MEHTA*

Professor,  
Incharge Head,  
Smt. S.H. Gardi Institute of  
English and Comparative Studies,  
Saurashtra University,  
Rajkot (Gujarat)

Submitted by :  
*SONIYA F. SAPOWADIA*

Lecturer,  
Smt. K.S.N. Kansagara  
Mahila Arts & Commerce College,  
Rajkot (Gujarat)

2006



RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
( 1861-1941 )

Blessed is he  
whose fame does  
not outshine his  
truth.

**SMT. S.H. GARDI INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH AND  
COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES,  
SAURASHTRA UNIVERSITY,  
RAJKOT. (GUJARAT)**

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the work embodied in this thesis entitled “**WOMAN IN TAGORE’S NOVELS – A Critical Study**” has been carried out by the candidate Mrs. Soniya F. Sapowadia under my direct guidance and supervision for the Degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*, in the Faculty of Arts of Saurashtra University, Rajkot. I further declare that the work done and presented in this thesis is original and independent.

I further certify that the work has not been submitted either partly or fully to any other University or Institute for the award of any Degree.

Supervisor  
*Dr. K. H. MEHTA*  
Professor &  
Incharge Head,  
Smt. S.H. Gardi Institute of  
English and Comparative Literary  
Studies,  
Saurashtra University,  
Rajkot (Gujarat)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would remain life-long indebted to Dr. Kamal Mehta, a profound scholar and my esteemed guide, Professor and Incharge Head of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, for his evertimely scholarly and angelic guidance, without which this work would not have been accomplished. I have no words to express my feeling of respect for him.

I owe my heart-felt gratitude to my Honorable Professor Dr. Avadhesh Kumar Singh, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Ambedkar Open University for his timely and scholastic guidance.

Also I express my sincere gratitude to...

\_\_\_\_\_ other faculties, the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, Dr. J.K. Dodiya for his help and support, Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, Mr. R.B. Zala and Mr. Anup Nair for their co-operation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Niranjana Mohanty, Professor and Head, VisvaBharti, Santiniketan for his help and co-operation in my endeavours as a research student.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Manoj Raval, R.P.Bhalodia College, Upleta, for his frequent academic suggestions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Nilesh Soni, Librarian, Saurashtra University, Ms. Harsha Trivedi, Librarian, K.S.N. Kansagara College, Rajkot, and also the librarians of the libraries I have visited, for extending library facilities to me.

\_\_\_\_\_Dr. Rajesh Kalariya, Principal, Prof. M.B. Roy, Head of the Department of English, Prof. B.M. Shah, Prof. K.S. Dahiya and all my colleagues of Smt. K.S.N. Kansagara Mahila College for their concern and co-operation during the period of my research.

\_\_\_\_\_Dr. Pragna Zaveri for her support and encouragement to accomplish my work.

I remember my professor ( Late ) Prof. D.B. Bhatt with respect on this occasion.

Words will never suffice my sense of gratitude when it comes to the motivation, support and blessings that my parents and parents-in-law shower upon me. I express my heart-felt gratitude to....

\_\_\_\_\_my mother Prof. Manju Fuletra and my mother-in-law Dr. K.H. Sapowadia for their boundless love and sincere help.

\_\_\_\_\_my father-in-law Shree Haribhai G. Sapowadia for his involvement and moral support.

\_\_\_\_\_my father Shree Ramesh Fuletra, Ex. Principal, J.H. Bhalodia College, a loving and inspiring mentor, for his critical suggestions, and moral support.

My thanks are due to my husband Mr. Fusion Sapowadia for having been understanding on all fronts and helpful with his excellent knowledge of computer. I express my

love for my child, Devansh for having been co-operative and an active inspirational force.

Also I thank Purvi and Shraddha my Sisters, Mr. Jayesh Zalavadia, my cousin who have been supportive during my work.

My thanks are due to all those who are unmentioned though, for their direct or indirect but invaluable help in more ways than one.

SONIYA FUSION SAPOWADIA



## CONTENTS

	Page No.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
CHAPTER – 1	1-18
INTRODUCTION	
CHAPTER – 2	19-41
WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL	
CHAPTER – 3	42-63
TAGORE'S NOVELS	
CHAPTER – 4	64-190
DIFFERENT FACETS OF WOMAN IN TAGORE'S NOVELS	
CHAPTER – 5	191-198
CONCLUSION	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	199-207

## CHAPTER – 1

### INTRODUCTION

Bengal has given a number of enlightened writers to India in particular and the world, in general. These Bengali writers made significant contribution to different forms of literature and also to the society. Among them, Rabindranath Tagore was a versatile genius whose many-sided interest proved that he had an integrated vision of life. Tagore was intensely concerned with the basic values of life. He did not leave any branch of knowledge and art untouched, especially literature was enriched by his touch and depth. Tagore's literary works knew no geographical boundaries, and as a result, he came to be known as world-apostle. His works have been translated into English and other languages too. Tagore, himself, also translated some of his works into English. Although the non-Bengali readers do not have the privilege of

reading Tagore in original Bengali, they have always been fascinated by his genius.

Tagore's novels have been studied with different perspectives viz. East-West encounter, humanism, love, and nationalism among others. He lived in the time when the forces of the Indian Renaissance had spread in all directions. Tagore's novels reflect the spirit of the age with keenness and fidelity. Reforms and balanced reflections are revealed as smell to the flower. Tagore chose art as a means to awaken a new consciousness. He was not a reformist in the limited sense of the word but whatever is good and humane came very naturally in his different endeavours. Tagore reveals the transitional period of India in which India had to fight with not only British invaders but also its own social evils, political issues, and economic problems. His was the voice of protest and revolution. Yet he knew that transformation of the social order was possible only through gradual progression.

Tagore sensed the genuine social change through new education and the emergence of woman as a social power. Tagore was a conscious and sensitive writer who knew that the contribution of women to human evolution can never be overlooked. Though he never believed that woman was inferior to man, he sincerely believed that a woman's domain was different from that of a man. Eventhough she could, she did not prefer to play the same role as man, in the society. The main objectives of the present research are as mentioned below :

1. From the spectrum of Tagore's works, the researcher has concentrated only upon his novels to study his concept of woman as revealed in his novels, as to whether he portrays woman as strong or weak, traditional or modern and as a victim or rebel.
2. Nineteenth century was the time when India re-discovered its own power. Not only men but also women participated in the freedom struggle. The researcher has tried to study whether the woman who was conscious of the liberty of the country was conscious of her own freedom or not. Also an endeavour is made to know What does Tagore's woman mean by the word emancipation?
3. The researcher has tried to further study Tagore's woman and her conscience, and examine whether the revival and revolution period affected the inner mind of woman or not.
4. The researcher has studied only those novels of Rabindranath Tagore, which lead to realization of the objectives in focus. The researcher's aim has been to extract the women from these novels and then to derive the image of woman in Tagore's mind.

## Rabindranath Tagore : The Polestar in the Tagorean - Galaxy

Rabindranath Tagore was one of the most towering figures of the century. It was he, who with his cultural and literary heritage enriched the literary world of Bengal. Rabindranath was born on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1861 in the family of the Tagores of Jarasanko, as the fourteenth child of Maharshi Debendranath and Sarda Devi. Hiren Mukerjee mentions that it was an amazing family in which Rabindranath was born; because there was a variety of talents in the family. The distinguished family was the center of music, art, poetry and culture. Maharshi Debendranath, the son of Prince Dwarkanath, was a learned and thoughtful man who managed '*Zamindari*' with righteousness and earned the title of 'Maharshi'.

Rabindranath's mother Sarda Devi was a woman of patience who could keep a large household in harmony. Since the family was too vast, the child Rabi could not receive much attention of his parents. He grew up under the care of servants. His mother could not spare much time to look after the youngest son Rabi, and therefore he craved for it more and more. His hunger for the mother's affection is mirrored in some of his exquisite poems, short stories and novels, where he depicted the mother's love as the greatest wealth. He mostly spent his time in loneliness during his childhood. Rabi's mind was nourished during that time, as he spent much of his time in his brother Dwijendranath's library. The library had a good

collection of Bengal books and periodicals where Rabindranath read the poetical works of Biharilal and *Vaishnav* lyrics, which appealed him most. He could understand Truth as illumination, which flooded the universe as well as his mind. When he imbibed the '*Gayatri Mantra*', it gave him strength and joy. 'Rabi'- his name filled his heart with pride as it means 'Sun' the fountain of light for the entire universe.

Rabindranath's father was opposed to school education, therefore, Tagore did not have much formal education. Private tutors had been engaged to teach him at home but Rabi started to yell to go to school. The first school he went to was known as 'The Oriental Seminary'. When he was seven, he was sent to another school, known as 'Normal School', which was a model school fashioned on the British pattern. Apart from the school hours, his daytime routine was packed with different lessons; teachers and experts used to come and give lessons on various subjects. Rabindranath recorded in his Reminiscences that as a child he did not like to learn the lessons proceeded by the light of an oil lamp. Like the most of the members of the family, Rabi enjoyed music. He had a natural gift of fine voice and an excellent grasping power. There were so many distinguished musicians who used to visit his house. One of them was Jadu Bhatta, a celebrated musician of Bengal who tried a lot to make Rabi learn but Rabi picked up only what he wanted to learn. Again, Rabi was admitted to another English school called the Bengal Academy. Rabi's father could see that he was allergic to schooling rather

formal schooling, therefore he asked the boy to accompany him to the Himalayas. Rabi needed a change, he was so excited and overjoyed for his first great and desirable adventure of life.

Their first halt was at 'Shantiniketan', the place where Maharshi had built a house called 'Shantiniketan', which means an abode of peace. Those few days at 'Shantiniketan', which Rabi spent with his father, left a profound impression upon him. The father could mould his mind directly and indirectly. It was the time, when Rabi wrote his first verse-drama, which was of course never published, as the manuscript was lost. From Shantiniketan they left for the Western Himalays and visited so many places. Rabi spent four months in his father's company, which made him enjoy the study and every little thing.

After returning from the Himalayas, he felt like a hero and became the center of interest. He narrated the story of his adventurous journey and talked about different subjects that he learnt delightfully from his father. He used to recite The Ramayana of Valmiki in the original Sanskrit.

Once again, the boring journey to school began. During the class hours, he wrote his first long poem Abhilash. The next school Rabi was admitted into was St. Xavier's. For Rabi it was as dull as the previous schools. It was a combination of hospital and goal for him. There was only one person whose memory remained with him forever, Father De

Peneranda who was a gentle person and about whom Tagore wrote in his My Reminiscences,

I cannot speak for the other boys but I felt in him the presence of a great soul, and even today the recollection of it seems, to give me a passport into the silent seclusion of the temple of God.

( My Reminiscences : 36 )

Ultimately, Rabi gave up going to school in 1875 when he was fourteen. The young boy Rabi, who was a voracious reader, was free to read what he enjoyed and his talent blossomed more at home. His was the house where he came in contact with poets, scholars, musicians, philosophers, artists and social reformers. On 8<sup>th</sup> March 1875, his mother Sarada Devi died. After that his elder brother Jyotindranath and his wife Kadambari replaced the other and proved themselves guides as well as playmates. For Rabi, Kadambari was a gracious lady and an ideal picture of love. They encouraged the young boy Rabi to reveal his poetic power. When he was fourteen, his first long narrative poem '*Banaphul*' of 1600 lines was published in a literary magazine Gyanankur. His first essay was also published in the same journal. Apart from his father, his brother Jyotindranath and his wife Kadambari Devi and other members of the family also influenced him potently during his formative years. The chief



among them were Swarankumari Devi, a talented sister who was the first Bengali woman to write considerable fiction, the eldest brother Dwijendranath, a saintly person who was a philosopher, poet and patriot and Satyendranath, the first Indian to succeed in the competitive exam held in England, and who loved his culture and country both.

The range of his interests was wider. He joined a secret society called '*Sanjivani Sabha*', founded by Jyotindranath and Rajnarayan Bose. The aim of the society was the political liberation of India.

The influence of Sanskrit literature, Medieval *Vaishnav* or religious love poetry and Western literature were the main influences on the literary development of Rabindranath. Though he was growing faster as a literary talent, Maharshi and the elders were worried about his future. The reason was that a literary career by itself was not a profession in those days. The young Rabi was sent to England with the elder brother Satyendranath. Before going to England, Rabi was sent to Bombay where Annapurna Turkhad –who was a daughter of a family friend had been told to educate Rabi. Annapurna or Anna was highly sophisticated and beautiful too. Anna was slightly elder than Rabi who inspired and encouraged Rabi to write more and more. Rabi gave her the name Nalini, which was the favourite name for him. Anna left a loving and permanent memory on Rabindranath's mind and heart.

On 20 September 1878, Rabindra went to England. From there he wrote letters to his relatives, which were published in Bharati. Rabindranath regretted for that in his My Reminiscences, and thought that they were just the outcome of his youthful bravado. Although they seemed to be insignificant and immature to Rabindranath, they have literary as well as historical significance.

After spending seventeen months in England, Rabindra returned home in February 1880. He came without any academic degree. The only thing he brought was the manuscript of a long lyrical drama Bhagna Hriday (The Broken Heart), which was unfinished but excellent. After Bhagna Hriday he wrote his first musical play Valmiki Pratibha (The Genius of Valmiki). Though the classical tradition of Indian music is ever alive and vital, Rabindranath's contribution to it was also creative and significant.

Again on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1881, he went to England and came back abortively. He spent some of his joyous days at Chandernagore where his brother Jyotindranath and his wife stayed. He wrote some of his light-hearted essays there and also his first full-fledged novel, Bou-Thakuranir Hat (The Young Queen's Market). His first novel, which is a historical melodrama, achieved praise, yet Rabindranath's individuality was not proved as it was moulded under the influence of Bankimchandra. The second novel he wrote was Rajarshi (The Royal Sage), which was later dramatized as Sacrifice. It was with Chokher Bali (1901-02) or Eyesore he attained maturity

and his own ways as a novelist. Vital themes, modern techniques and efforts to dig out the truth of social life made his novels different and advanced from his earlier master Bankimchandra.

Rabindranath also assisted his brother Jyotindranath to establish 'The Saraswat Samaj' in 1882. (the first Literary Academy in India). It was founded with the idea to enlarge and equip their mother tongue Bengali with scientific thought and terminology. Bankimchandra also participated in that task. During this period Rabindranath did not stop his creative writings. His other works like Prakritir Pratishodh (A Verse drama), Rahur Prem (a poem), Alochana (A thoughtful analysis of literary, social, political and philosophical problems) etc. also came to be written.

In 1883, Rabindranath's father decided that his young son must be made to face the responsibilities of life, so the family must look for a suitable bride for him. Their choice fell on the ten years old girl of a humble family namely Bhavatarini, but after marriage it was changed into Mrinalini. She was a plain girl and almost illiterate, but Rabindranath meekly accepted the choice of the family. As K. R. Kripalani writes,

History has its ironies and thus this unromantic marriage was arranged for one of the most romantic men of his age.

( Kripalani : 112 )

Though she was an unglamorous bride, she proved herself to be an excellent and devoted wife. In the next year of his marriage, Rabindranath experienced the bitter truth, his favourite sister-in-law Kadambaridevi died. One of his brothers, Hemendranath, also died, but Rabindranath accepted the reality. His love for them gave him a deeper understanding of life and death, rather of world in its wholeness.

In 1886, Tagore's first child Madhurilata or Bela was born and in 1886 another child, a son Rathindranath was born. Rabindranath accompanied his brother Satyendranath to England again. During this period, his poems, which were the outpourings of his mature mind, were written. The collection of those poems was published as Manasi (on 3 Nov. 1890)/ Edwards Thompson who was the only English critic who could appreciate Tagore in the original Bengali said that 'it marked his definite attainment of maturity'.

Rabindranath provided different works for his family magazines called Sadhana and Bharti. His works were the embodiments of art and life. His concern was not only literary or poetic, as he wanted to do what little could be done for enhancement of the plans and programmes of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda, - the most important pioneers who had the reformative zeal.

Rabindranath actively assisted the large-hearted Sister Nivedita when she organized relief work for plague victims in Calcutta in 1898.

In 1901, Tagore founded his institution to experiment in the educational field. It was the same place where as a child he spent some days with his father and enjoyed learning. Maharishi had purchased the place and named it Shantiniketan. Tagore had the painful memory of his own schooldays, which made him to play the role of an educationist. Many years later he founded a parallel institution named 'Sriniketan'. He also helped the Indian peasants to build their own schools and hospitals, water-tanks, banks etc. After receiving Nobel Prize for Gitanjali in 1913, the amount he got as Nobel Prize was donated by him to his school in 'Shantiniketan' and invested in the agricultural co-operative bank at Potisar. It helped the peasants and the school both.

Tagore's creative personality reconciled in him the regional and the global, the emotional and the spiritual, the ancient and the modern. It was a time of reawakening in India, therefore, Tagore also waged a war against the social odds in his works and deeds. Though he actively worked for the country, rather preceded Gandhi in some ideals and implementations of them, he could not be single-minded. He raised his voice for Hindu-Muslim unity, the development of cottage industries, socially constructive nationalism etc. In 1902, his wife, who brought order into his life and gave five children, died. Nine months after her death, his loving daughter Renuka also died. After that Satis Roy, whom Tagore loved as his own son, died. Again, on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1905, Tagore's father, the Maharshi died. Although Tagore was

deeply moved during those years, he did not discontinue his writings and political activities. He ardently and intensely participated in political activities. He also gave lectures and sang songs in public meetings and inspired people to join the freedom movement, Although he could not remain active in the struggle after some years as he differed on some matters from those who violently worked for India's freedom, Tagore attacked upon those extremist activities and rejected violence of all sorts. In his novels The Home and The World and Four Chapters he reveals such political background along with the main themes. In his significant poem The Sunset of the Century he denounces nationalism as 'self-love of nations'. Those who know Tagore only as an artist, have seen only a single-side of his personality.

All that he was, but the visionary never blinked at reality, the idealist's feet were firmly planted on the rough ground and the sweet singer, like Wordsworth's Skylark, was 'true to the kindred points of heaven and home'.( Kripalani : 161 )

In 1919, Tagore renounced the knighthood that had followed the Noble Award as he was hurt by the Amritsar massacre of Jalianwallah Bagh. Tagore, in spite of difference on some fundamental issues, loved and understood Mahatma

Gandhi. In fact, both of them knew the differences and disputes between them and yet had respect for each other.

In 1921, Tagore formally inaugurated his "World University" (*Visvabart*). His ideal, to make the whole world a single nest, made him to visit different countries. He made friendship with the great minds of the world. Krishna Kripalani states in this connection, "He was a world citizen not because he became world famous but because he felt with the world".

( Kripalani : 235 )

In the same year Mahatma Gandhi visited Calcutta and persuaded Tagore to give active support to his political movement, nevertheless both the friends agreed to disagree. In 1922, Tagore wrote Mukta-Dhara (Free current, The Waterfall) a play, which was about Mahatma Gandhi and his campaign of non-violence. In 1925, Mahatma tried again to make him convinced that the *Charkha* and *Khadi* would lead them towards (Spinning wheel and hand-spun cloth) *Swaraj*.

In 1928, along with his writings, he also began his experiments in a new medium of artistic expression – painting. He was delighted with himself like a child who is happy with a newfound toy. He painted in between the intervals of his literary activity. All the paintings and drawings (nearly 2500), were done during the last thirteen years of his life. His paintings were described by him as "Versification in lines".

In 1932, his only grandson Nitindra, a sensitive young man, died, but Tagore could accept that also; he

believed that sorrow and defeat were part of life and must be accepted with manly dignity.

In 1934, Tagore decided to make his university productive, as he suffered from the financial problem. Though he belonged to a very wealthy family he lived simply. What he got from his family estates might have been enough for his personal and family needs as he despised luxury. The royalties what he got from his works had already been given by him to his university, Visva-Bharti.

The artist in Tagore inspired him to see his own creations on the stage. His songs and ballets were those aspects of his creative mind, which could be understood and enjoyed by those who did not know Bengali. He trained the students to perform his plays and ballets in different towns and thus the trained actors and dancers raised money for the university. In fact, Tagore's attempt became a mission of creative and educative importance.

In 1936, he delivered three lectures: "Ideals of Education", "Place of Music in Education" and "Education naturalized" in Calcutta. In the same year he prepared a musical version of his early drama Chitrangada or Chitra. His talented daughter-in-law Pratimadevi assisted him in this interesting task. When Gandhiji came to know about Tagore's tours to raise funds for his university, he could not see Tagore, now the aged and not much healthy, undertaking such tours for funds. He sent a letter with a bank draft of Rs. 60,000 enclosed with it, as an offering from "Humble Countrymen".



Tagore was so grateful to him and was deeply touched. However, he continued another kind of work, i.e. to lecture in public meetings.

Tagore delivered the convocation address of the Calcutta University in February 1937. It was the first occasion in the eighty years of history that a private citizen rather than instead of the British Viceroy or the Governor, was given this privilege. Tagore delivered this address in Bengali and used this occasion for a great appeal for the use of the mother tongue as the medium of education. In the same year, in August, Tagore addressed a public meeting in Calcutta to show his protest against the circumstances in Andaman where the political prisoners were kept and were on hunger strike there. In September, he suddenly fell ill, and lost consciousness. His friend Sir Nilaratan Sircar was a notable physician who came with other specialists from Calcutta, and was there for five days until Tagore recovered his consciousness. As soon as he regained his consciousness, he asked for colours and brush and started painting on a piece of plywood, which was lying in a room. In the same year and the subsequent two years, his other literary publications of humorous poems in the nursery rhyme manner, fantasies in prose, a primer in modern science, socio-political essays etc. were written.

Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba visited Tagore for the last time in February 1940. Before Gandhiji left, Tagore requested him to take "Shantiniketan" under his protection. Mahatma modestly replied that God protects the creation of an

earnest soul. He also promised Tagore all kinds of assistance for the institution, and he kept his words. In the same year Oxford University conferred on him the degree of D.Litt. Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Chief Justice of India, said, "The university whose representative I am, has in honoring you, done honor to itself".

Though aged and ill, Tagore was still alert and active and wrote three short-stories – Teen Sangi contained three short stories named, 'Ravivar' ( 'On a Sunday' ), 'Sesh Katha' ('Last Word' ) and 'Laboretori' ( 'The Laboratory' ).

On 7<sup>th</sup> August '1941 at midday he passed away, but his deeds made him immortal. Dr. Srinivas Iyenger states,

He belongs unquestionably to Bengali literature, but he belongs to Indo-Anglian literature too – indeed, he belongs to all India and the whole world. He was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer; he was a musician and a painter; he was an educationalist, a practical idealist who turned his dreams into reality at Shantiniketan; he was a reformer, Philosopher, Prophet; he was a novelist and short-story writer, and a critic of life and literature; he even made occasional incursions into nationalist politics, although he was essentially an

internationalist. He was thus many persons, he was a darling of versatility, and still he was the same man; he was an integral whole, the *Rishi*, the *Gurudev*.

( Iyengar : 99 )

#### References

Iyengar, K.R.S., Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1962.

Kripalani, Krishna, Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography, London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Tagore, Rabindranath, My Reminiscences, Madaras: MacMillan India Ltd., 1971.

## CHAPTER – 2

### WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

The Nineteenth Century Bengal :

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the dawn of a new consciousness. The whole country was under the spell of new educational and intellectual forces. It was the age of knowing the self and others too. If we borrow the word 'Renaissance' for the changes and reformations that took place in India, it was Bengal which first experienced the storm of new ideas. For the term 'Renaissance' Prof. Namvar Singh says,

It was first used in English writings in Bengal and it is said that it was used for the first time by an Englishman named Alexander Duff. It was later taken up by RamMohan Roy and afterwards the Bengalis began to use it.

( Singh Namvar : 57 )

Though the whole country went through changes in social, political and educational fields, it was Bengal to first experience the changes in various fields. The East India Company had its center in Calcutta, which made Calcutta the first colonial capital of India. Again it was Bengal only that could resist colonialism with strong efforts. RamMohan Roy and some other enlightened Bengali scholars and reformers were under the colonial influence. The new rulers – the British were instrumental in planting the seeds of modernization process in the eighteenth century, which started burgeoning in the nineteenth century. In India, 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period when people began to discuss the questions of identity, status of women, social evils etc. Many intellectuals welcomed and praised the British Raj. Some of the scholars began to abandon Hinduism as they considered religion as the root cause of the social evils but gradually that also produced a reaction, and many nationalist intellectuals could see the solutions in the traditions and culture of their own country.

Before the agitation began in Bengal, higher education had become just a tool to impart the knowledge of religion or orthodox principles and it was same both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The period was not favorable for women. There were different standards to judge the individual and social conduct of man and woman in India. Only man could think about rights and freedom from which woman was always excluded.

There were many factors directly and indirectly responsible for the continuous deterioration in the status of Indian woman in medieval times. The growing pressure of the invaders upon India adversely affected the condition of women in India. The sense of insecurity grew in the Indian society, due to which so many social evils had crept into Indian society. Early marriage, enforced widowhood, *Sati*, temple prostitution, *purdah*, dowry, female infanticide, polygamy etc. were the evils which made the women sufferers.

In 1774, the new Council and Supreme Court were established in Calcutta. Sir Warren Hastings was appointed as the Governor General and thus the political change came in India. With the establishment of the British rule, not only political but also economic, social and cultural life of Bengal went through changes. Calcutta was the center of most of the literary, religious, social and educational movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. The new risen middle class was eager to welcome English education, Western Arts and Sciences in India. The Bengalis thought that British would bring to them peace, prosperity and security which they could not enjoy during the Muslim rule. People due to English education, inclined towards rational thinking which led them to rethink about their rigid social customs and blind religious faith. The revolution that came in every field had changed the scenario of the country.

The British introduced the enlightenment of European Renaissance. Indians thus entered in the new age of

science and humanism. Earlier, the Christian Missionaries used to impart English education in Bengal. The missionaries had also at the same time, converted so many Bangali Hindus into Christianity by pointing at the superstitions in their religion.

In 1817, 'The Calcutta School Book Society' and 'The Hindu College' were established. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the Law member (1834-1838) in the Governor General's supreme council in India, wrote a long Minute on Indian education, which led Lord Bentinck to pass the resolution to spend Government's educational funds on English education alone. In 1857, the university of Calcutta was established, which marked the ushering of Western education in Bengal. Most of the reformers who brought about the massive changes in society, had the English education.

They were Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Keshobchandra Sen, Derozio, Debendranath Tagore etc. who contributed in the reformation of the society. Not only such social reformers but there were Ramkrishna Paramhansa and his learned and dynamic disciple Swami Vivekananda who preached the people the true meaning of the Hindu scriptures. They also stressed that all religions were true and pure in essence, if pursued properly. Vivekananda, in 1893, at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, made the Western people think that the Hindu religion was one of the loftiest religions and it never taught rigid and superstitious beliefs to the

people. Thus, Bengal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was illumined by such remarkable social, religious and literary reformers.

Not only the Indians but the British Orientalists also played a vital role in re-discovering the past glory of India. Sir William Jones, H.T. Coleridge, James Prinsep etc. were such orientalists. 'The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal' was founded by Sir William Jones in 1784 at Calcutta, which promoted Asiatic Studies.

In 1885, The Indian National Congress was founded. The educated people, who loved British in the beginning, for the changes and education they introduced, were also conscious now that their own country i.e. India was not free. By the end of the nineteenth century, the scholars expressed their love for liberty through the medium of literature.

Woman in the Nineteenth century Bengal :

19<sup>th</sup> century India was striving for independence and Bengal was one of the most important centers of India where people struggled for the right of freedom. Any culture and civilization is incomplete without its women folk. The position and status of woman in a particular society reveals the true facet of the society.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women of India acquired new confidence, consciousness and courage that they had lost because of the social evils against them. Women of India got involved in the agitation against British imperialism when the



reformers like Gandhiji inspired them. But such movement gave birth to their own struggle also – the struggle for social justice.

“A struggle within the struggle”.

( Jain & Mahan : 91 )

In Bengal, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the birth of a girl child was still not welcomed. A girl was brought up with relative neglect. Only few girls could get education and that also would be ended by early marriages.

Margaret M. Urquhart, who lived in Bengal for twenty-five years and saw the life of Bengali woman as it was actually lived during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, could see both darker and positive sides of their lives. She mentions that a “wise passiveness” is a distinguishing trait in the character of Bengali women. ( Urquhart : 5 )

Bengali woman, before the gradual change came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had to face the bitter realities of the society. There were so many evil socio – religious practices, sinister customs, irrational religious rites and inhuman superstitions, which made the Bengali woman a victim as well as neglected entity in the society.

The woman of Bengal, though lived in seclusion, her fine and rare qualities were not hidden. She was always a loving and devoted mother first. She is a good, efficient and painstaking housewife, who was caring by nature. Bengali woman was simple yet beautiful.

In a woman of Bengal there always was the blend of inner beauty with the outer beauty and that made her natural beauty. When we look at her physique and features, she is of average height yet the stature is graceful. In complexion she is fairer than the southern and western women of India, but darker than the northern. She has the expressive eyes and the clear skin and refined features. A Bengali woman always has obsession for her fine hair.

The Bengali woman was lively and witty, though she was deprived of education. Many of the Bengali women had a great natural intelligence and desire for knowledge too. Bengal produced the talented women like Swarnakumari Devi, Lilabati Mitra, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu etc. Bengal could have produced more and more women intellectuals but for so many years the women had to starve for knowledge, and they had been taught self-suppression. The Bengali women could not express their desire to learn or to get formal education. The education for a Bengali woman did not mean the development of the mental faculties, but on the contrary, she used to get a training of submissiveness and unquestioning acceptance of authority. The society made her, outwardly at least, meek and timid. Thus, the intellectual difference between Bengali man and woman was manmade.

There were a few who could get education, in the sense of 'schooling', but that also used to come to end at the time of marriage that is at about eleven or twelve years. Marriage meant the family alliances rather than individual

partnerships. Marriage was a lifetime bond, as there was no provision for divorce. In such marriage, there was no scope for romantic feelings as social norms and discipline were important than love and affection between husband and wife. Young married couple was not supposed to meet or even talk with each other during the daytime in the presence of elders. The wife would rise earlier than the other members of the family, and would take the dust of her husband's feet reverently. She was not supposed to eat anything before the male members of the family had been fed. Not only that but the young women of the family were not given the healthy food like fish or milk which was considered as the common source of vitamins in the Bengali diet.

If the bride could not bear a child in a reasonable period of time, the mother-in-law might think about the re-marriage of her son. In some families the son would be made to marry again, if the wife could not give birth to a male child. According to their religious blind faith only son could save his father from the pains of Hell after the death, as he performs some requisite rites. The Bengali mother always seemed to be a son-loving mother but her love, however did not exclude her daughter. Mother was always a comrade for her daughter, especially when she visited the paternal house. Her mother gave freedom from the stricter rules and conventions at least during her stay there at her father's house.

Although woman is regarded as '*Sakti*' in India, especially in Bengal, even a little girl is addressed as '*Ma*', yet

this mother had to endure lot of pains. Scholars have reflected such a grim picture of the early nineteenth century Bengal where woman suffered a lot. The terrible sufferings and social injustice made almost all the reformers to think and act for the cause of emancipation of woman. Child marriage was the root cause of physical and moral degradation in the society. Though it was irrational, it had been institutionalized by society for centuries. In Bengal, the reformers like Raja RamMohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Keshobchandra Sen, Debendranath Tagore etc. paid attention to such problems and tried to eradicate them from the society.

Raja RamMohan Roy ( 1772-1833 ) established the Brahmo Samaj on 20<sup>th</sup> Aug 1828. He made unsuccessful attempt to prevent his brother's widow Alokmanjari committing Sati, in 1811. Herself immolation gave a rude shock to the mind of Ram Mohan Roy and he began his work against the social evils of the Indian society.

The British could not decide whether they should interfere with the socio-religious structure of Indian society or not, therefore they were hesitant to do anything against the custom of Sati. In Bengal, there were many instances of sati. Ram Mohan Roy persuaded Lord William Bentinck (1828-1832) to outlaw the custom of *sati*. Ram Mohan Roy declared that the Vedas did not sanction it. Even other enlightened Indians shared the same conviction about such diabolic custom. RamMohan Roy continued his campaign against *sati* and he used his journal '*Sambad Kaumudi*' (which appeared

from 1821) as a regular platform against *sati*. In 1822, he published his celebrated article entitled "Modern Encroachment on the Ancient Right of Females" in which he explained that women committed sati to escape the horrors of a widow's life.

The orthodox Hindus were against the abolition of such ancient and time honored religious rite, yet it was abolished in 1829 by Lord Bentinck. *Sati* was abolished and it was declared illegal and punishable by criminal courts by Regulation XVII.

The reformers could not stop because *sati* was not rooted out yet. The custom continued to prevail in other way, as a widow was permitted to live, but her existence was made miserable by the society. A widow was considered an unauspicious person and hence excluded from all the socio-religious ceremonies. In Bengal, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Ram Mohan Roy advocated the right of a widow to remarry. In the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century remarriage became the center of their reform activities. In October 1855, Vidyasagar sent a petition signed by him and 900 Bengalis to the British government in which he demanded that remarriage should be given legal sanction. In Bengal orthodox Bengalis, were large in number; so a counter petition was sent against such a reform in the society. There were 37000 Bengalis of that orthodox section and Raja Radhakant Dev was the leader of that conservative group of Bengal. Despite their hostile reaction, the reform movement did not stop, as it gained the

able leadership of Vidyasagar. Vidyasagar's own son Narayan married a widow and set an example in the society. In 1856, the bill for widow remarriage was introduced in the Governor General's Council by J.P. Grant and the bill became an act. Though the bill was passed by the British Government, the credit of this change goes largely to Vidyasagar. Vidyasagar also did a pioneering work on the issue of child marriage but his sincere efforts could not root out child marriages. They were successful only when the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly known as the *Sarada* Act, was passed ( in 1929 ).

Polygamy was also one of the major evils, which were responsible to lower the status of Indian woman. Though it was more prevalent in Bengal, especially among the upper class such practices were common. In Bengal, the upper classes such as *Kulin Brahmins* carried it not only because of the desire to have more children, rather sons, but also because of their extreme sensuality. The reformers raised their voice against polygamy and they also made women realize their own worth.

In fact, In Bengal, the late nineteenth century or the early twentieth century was a time when women realized their pitiable condition. Of course, they themselves had not emerged as the womenfolk with independent voice. The reformers' attempts to spread higher education were successful to some extent. Vidyasagar wanted to introduce many other changes. He might not have got much success in implementing the idea

of widow-remarriage, but the idea regarding female education had been relatively more successful.

It was a time when woman's literacy was considered as the sign of her immorality. There was a belief prevalent in orthodox Indian society that educated women were likely to be widowed. Some educated people of upper class, however tried to educate the women of their families, yet such instances were rare in the society. Though the woman of Bengal used to get the education of religion and culture at home, she had not received the formal education yet.

From 1807, the Christian missionaries started a school for the Christian convents, but after some years, they ran schools for all however it was compulsory to study Christian scriptures in such schools. In 1854, the Government entered in the field of women's education in Bengal. In 1859, Mrs. Sale began to instruct women at their homes, in Calcutta. Thus, women education spread in both the ways. The Bengalis could see that the education given by the missionaries was not free from Christian bias, as the teachers were devoted to their own religion.

Keshobchandra Sen encouraged the women to study and started the *Brahmobandhu Sabha*, which organized the *Anthapur Strisikha*. He aimed at educating the women at home or the secluded women at home. It was an attempt made by the Bengalis for themselves. There was a specific syllabus and also the regular examination – system in such kind of education system introduced by Keshobchandra Sen in 1863.

In the same year, Umeshchandra Datta started another organization to spread women education at home. He also started *Bamabodhini Patrika*, a journal in which the Bengali women, for the first time published their own writings. After some years, both these organizations joined hands to spread education for the secluded women and thus formal education for the girls in regular schools started making its way in the society.

Keshobchandra Sen, after his successful attempts for the education among women, had not stopped. In 1865, he started a women's society known as *Brahmika Samaj*, to impart religious education. The Bengali women assembled outside their houses for such education. Government gave grants to the missionaries for home education. There were several organizations, which spread home education in Bengal. After such successful attempts to educate women at home, the formal education in schools was also introduced. In the beginning the mission schools were opened but the upper class Bengali girls had not joined such schools.

Uptil 1847, only mission schools functioned in Bengal to educate Bengali girls. Then came a school for Hindu girls at Barasat ( near Calcutta ) with the support of the local gentleman and particularly Pearycharan Sarkar, the



Head Master of the local Government school for boys.

In 1849 Drinkwater Bethune started another girls' school in Calcutta for the 'respectable' girls of Bengal on a secular basis, and this was called Calcutta Female School, now the Bethune school.

( Chakrabarti : 45-46 )

Government took charge of that school in 1856 and girls got free education. Even free books were also provided to the students.

In 1857, Government appointed Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar as a special inspector for girls' schools for the districts of Hoogly, Burdwan and Midnapore and promised aid to such schools through him verbally.

( Chakrabarti : 47 )

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar gave a report in favour of such schools in those districts but the Mutiny of 1857 made the government severe about such help. Vidyasagar resigned from his post and started his efforts for such schools from the local resources.

Thus, the education for girls and grown-up women spread in Bengal with the endeavours of the enlightened reformers of Bengal. Keshobchandra Sen also started a college

to promote higher education for women. Still it was difficult for the women of Bengal to get admission in the Medical College of Culcutta. Some intelligent women students of Bengal could not get admission in the Medical College only because they were women.

A strong public agitation had arisen since 1882 in Bengal and the Lieutenant Governor realized its force and permitted women to enter the Calcutta Medical College in 1883. ( Chakrabarti : 54 )

Mrs. Kadambini Ganguli opened the medical profession for Bengali girls by joining this profession for the first time in Bengal as a woman doctor.

Keshobchandra Sen gave his contribution for the training of female teachers. The Government also noted the success of all such attempts and decided to give financial help to Kashobchandra's school in 1872-73.

The orthodox Hindus and Muslims opposed such education and refused to adopt the teaching career for their daughters. In spite of all such objections, so many women became successful teachers and proved their abilities. Though the girls and women started taking primary and higher education in formal schools and colleges, they had not left learning different crafts and skills at their homes. In the same period, Rassundari devi, a Bengali woman who was a house

wife, wrote *Amar Jiban* the first full-scale autobiography in the Bengali language.

In Bengal, the spread of women's education generated new ideas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was also a time of political upheaval in India, and Gandhi's charisma had cut across the barriers of caste, class, province and also gender. Women started taking part in '*Swadeshi movement*'. The Bengali women very actively participated, directly and indirectly, in the Indian National Movement. The entry of woman into politics was made easy by transforming nationalism into religion. Saraladebi Chodharani was the first Bangali woman leader in the Indian National Movement.

Woman in the nineteenth century Bengali Novel :

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life. What they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it, which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language.

( Husdon W.H. : 10 )

In the nineteenth century, Raja Ram Mohan Roy fortified the moral consciousness of the people against the

social evils. He also proposed a synthesis between the Indian and the Western cultures as one of the solutions of many social evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was well versed in Arabic and Persian and made him-self acquainted with the Greek thinkers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle through Arabic translation. He imbibed the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. This intelligent social reformer attacked the various social evils through the medium of literature too. In his writings he clearly stated his intention to protest against those evils, which made the status of women worse than that of animals. Maharshi Debendranath Tagore also joined him and gave a new direction to the *Brahmo Samaj*. *Brahmo Samaj* was the symbol of Bengal renaissance, both religious and cultural.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ishwar Gupta, Akshoy Kumar Dutta, Chadranath Basu and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay followed RamMohan Roy and tried to reform the society through literature. Vidyasagar and Keshobchandra Sen contributed directly by implementing their radical ideas in the society like RamMohan Roy did.

Rabindranath Tagore was well versed in the Indian religious texts as well as European and English literature. His wide reading had made him absorb the best of the East and the West. He also found himself caught in the winds of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance in India. Tagore believed that the real problem of India was rooted in the society itself. Tagore, the most versatile man of his age, also shared the opinions of

RamMohan Roy, and revealed the synthesis of different cultures in his works. Tagore played various roles of a poet, dramatist, novelist nationalist, internationalist, composer and painter. He very naturally formed the moral consciousness of the society through the medium of literature. He was a man who was keenly aware of his social responsibility as a citizen of the country. He served his purpose through the medium of language and literature. His language was neither the language of a political leader nor a social reformer but that of an artist and thinker.

Bengali literature was fortunate enough to have Bankimchandra, Tagore and Saratchandra as the novelists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Novel is the description of life, which may have the fictitious part alone with the realism. " No fiction can be called a novel in the absence of the picture of real life".

( Biswas : 26 )

Novel, which was a new form in the nineteenth century, worked as an expression of the new social mind. The novelists revealed the different aspects of the society and directed their attention towards the evil spots within the society. The reformers did a lot to eradicate social evils of the society but they might not have thought about 'individual freedom' for women. The writers not only wrote of the social status of women but they also wrote for the individuality and identity of women. The novelists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal took up the themes like the lower status of women, the dowry system, the system of purchasing brides, social injustice, right

to divorce and also the emotional relationship between man and woman. In fact, in Bengali literature novel originated during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was a time when Bankimchandra appeared in the literary field of Bengal. Bankimchandra witnessed the upheavals in the Bengali society during this time. He projected the growing consciousness of Bengali mind in his novels. Bankim dealt with the different subject matters such as individual, society, religion and country in his novels. Bankim was very much influenced by the romantic novels of Sir Walter Scott. Before he entered in to the field of Bengali fiction, Bankim also contributed to Sambad Prabhakar and Sambad Saduranjan edited by Ishwarchandra Gupta. His Rajmohan's Wife was serialized in the journal, The Indian Field edited by Kishory chand Mitra. Durgeshnadini, Kapalkundala, Mrinalini, Vishabriksha, Chandrasekar, Rajani, Kishnakanter Will, Anandmath, Rajsimha etc. are his famous novels.

Bankim was a historical and social novelist. Bankim could represent the growing middle class and their aspirations. Bankim's woman is full of sentiments but his attempt to portray her as an ideal woman ends in painting her as a rigid woman. Though a forward-looking man, he surrendered to accepted social and moral ideas and ideals. We can see how Bankim shows his "conventional Hindu resistance to widow marriage" (Kabir : 21) in his Vishbriksha and Kishnakanter Will.

Rabindranath emerged in Bengali literature by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rabindranath revealed the harmony as well as conflict in the middle class of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His novels were more realistic and were the psychoanalysis of the life of the middle class Bengalis of his time. As Bankim loved the ancient traditions, his characters could not cross the limits of idealism, and, if some of them could, then they were punished severely. For Rabindranath, society was not more important than the people who lived in.

Saratchandra, a genius, was almost a contemporary of Tagore. Saratchandra was conscious of the unsatisfactory status of women in the society. He pointed out the various evils within the Bengali society and analysed sympathetically the conditions of the women of the then society. Saratchandra portrayed the woman who was beautiful, not because of her external beauty but by the richness of the virtues stored within her heart. He believed that the sincere love was more important than anything else in woman. Saratchandra's woman is dynamic, but her movements are controlled by the society. His woman has been assigned the important place but within the social fabric, the woman enjoyed and occupied her position because of her attachment with the society. In spite of all these, she has to be ready for sorrows and exploitations in the society. For example, Ananda didi and RajLakshmi in Srikanta were the poor victims of the society and circumstances.

Saratchandra never violated the moral values, though he attempted for a pious representation of prohibited romance. He did not consider such love as unhealthy. He depicted various problems of Hindu society such as caste system, widow – remarriage, polygamy etc. He observed the Bengali society with all her positive and negative sides. He revealed the hearts of Bengali women, which were full of emotions, dreams and desires. He became the voice of the oppressed class, which could not utter anything due to the pressure of the circumstances. As a novelist, he painted a picture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengali society and revealed the problems but left the solutions for them upon the society. Saratchandra always wrote with the social purpose whether implicit or explicit. His novels revealed his humanism as he was always with the victims and had bitterness against hypocrites.

Saratchandra's woman is more emotional than intellectual. She is more concerned with society. There are also the rebels but then they are like outcasts for the society. Saratchandra is a realist who "follows the tradition of Tagore's earlier novels but his originality lies in his unconcealed sympathy with the rebels against social traditions". (Kabir :66)

Saratchandra's Vijaya ( Datta ), Annadadidi, Kamal-lata and Rajlakshmi ( Srikanta ), Kiranmoyee and Sabitri ( Charitraheen ), Achala ( Grihadaha ), Rama ( Palli Samaj ), Sandhya ( Bamuner Meye ), Kamal ( Sesh Prashna ), Bharati



(Pather Dabi), Bandana ( Bipradas ) etc. are the memorable loving women characters of Bengali novel.

Saratchandra could see the balance between instinct and society more in woman than in man. Woman pays attention to intuition and emotion than intellect. Saratchandra's woman cannot resist the force of the sublime feeling of love but she cannot ignore the society. In fact, her traditional beliefs lead her to resist the call for love. It is the reason why Rama in Palli Samaj dejects the love of Ramesh, Sabitri in Charitraheen could not fulfill her love for Satish, Rajlakshmi in Srikanta could not unite with Srikanta. Saratchandra's sympathy was always for the women – the oppressed class of man – made society.

We can see that Saratchandra, like his predecessor Tagore, questioned some rigid and tyrannical social conventions. With all respect to old values he aimed at some changes in them. Saratchandra who became a very popular novelist of Bengal had "repeatedly acknowledged his indebtedness to Tagore and one can notice the many ways in which Tagore influenced him". ( Kabir : 73 )

Though Tagore and Saratchandra wrote most of their works in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the nineteenth century renaissance played a vital role in the formation of their intellectual and creative genius. The nineteenth century Renaissance casts its shadow on the twentieth century and therefore we see the true representation of the society and woman of the then time in

the novels of such writers with reformative Zeal. They also show the changes, if any, accepted by the society. Woman who is the most important part of the society always earned admiration and sympathy of such conscious writers like Tagore and Saratchandra.

### References

- Biswas, Dipti Kumar, Sociology of Major Bengali Novels, Gurgaon: The Academic Press, 1974.
- Chakrabarti, Usha, Condition of Bengali Women, Calcutta: by the author, 1963.
- Hudson, W.H., An Introduction to the study of Literature, London: George G. Harper & Co. Ltd., 1958.
- Jain, Pratibha & Mahan, Ranjan, (Eds.) Women Images, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1996.
- Kabir, Humayun, The Bengali Novel, Calcutta: Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Singh, Namvar, "The Nineteenth Century Indian Renaissance : Reality or Myth", Indian Renaissance Literature, New Delhi: Creative Books, 2003.
- Urquhart, Margaret M., Women of Bengal, Delhi: Cultural Publishing House, (Reprinted) 1983.

### CHAPTER – 3

#### TAGORE'S NOVELS

Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Bengali but the scope of his mind could not be confined to any part of India. He was essentially an Indian and at the same time he embraced the entire humanity. Tagore, the man of letters and the man of deeds, sorted out crucial problems of the contemporary society, and created mass awareness through his literary works. He saw the current social, political, economic problems of his time and depicted them in his novels. Almost all his novels reveal the reality in the context of the wide humanity and mankind. Furthermore, his technique is modern and themes were vital. There are a few Indian writers of that period who could reflect the spirit of their age with keenness and fidelity; Tagore is one of them.

The Humanist in Tagore wished sincerely to do away with some burning issues of his time. For example, a serious social evil regarding child widows which he considered as an

unkind and unjust custom. The remarriage of widows was looked down upon by the so called elite and polite society of Bengal before 1910. Tagore did not believe that only by passing a bill the social order would change; nor did he believe that by amending the mistake of the people of a particular area would bring about the overall change in the society at large. As a true artist, he chose art as a means to reform and by awakening a new consciousness he tried to mend the society. Binoy Bhattacharjee, while evaluating him as a reformer, observes, "To the best of my understanding Tagore was a radical. His idea of social change basically rests on his concept of man and society. He wanted to reconstruct the society with its entirety". ( Bhattacharjee : 91-93 )

Not only through his works but to set an example before society, he got his son Rathindranath married to a widow named Pratima Devi.

Tagore presents the social picture of the then contemporary India with all its glory and gloom; he creates different characters and assesses the behaviour and the values inherent in them. It is he, who, as a novelist, for the first time in Indian fiction, dives deep into the psyche of his characters. He portrays them authentically and records their psychological responses to the social background. He, in his novels, examines the social structure, points out its pitfall and as a guiding spirit of new Indian society suggests the change. Although he aims at change, he does not disrespect the age-old values. Before Tagore, Bankimchandra had dominated the

Bengali literary scene. He echoed social conventions in his novel Visha Vriksha (Poison tree) supported social disapproval of widow rehabilitation through remarriage, as he did not support the reform movement for the widows. Sukumar sen points out thus,

Chatterji was one of the first two graduates of the newly founded (1857) Calcutta University. He however, held orthodox view on some vital social problems and did not support widow remarriage. ( Sen : 213 )

Tagore proved himself to be more progressive than Bankim chandra in his thought, expression and deeds. His was the voice of protest and revolution, yet he tried to transform the social order through gradual realization. He sensed the original social change through new education, the emergence of woman as a social power and song of welcome. It was a time when women of the west aspired for freedom and were determined to overcome all the obstacles on the way of their liberation. Tagore was aware of all that happened in the West and the East too, so he had emphasized that it was through co-operation among the both and correction of the ways of men that women would enjoy their place and position in society. Tagore's reformatory zeal pertaining to women's emancipation is evident in his novels in general and in

Binodini in particular. He could reflect the temper ament of his country and age without distorting it.

Tagore began with the novel Pity but it was rejected by Tagore him self. So Bauthkuranier Hat ( The young queen's Market) is considered to be his first novel. The novel came out as a serial in 1881. Bauthakuranier Hat talks of the old values of Hindu society. The novel is a shadow of Bankim's novels both in manner and matter. The novel was not praised by Tagore him self. The next to follow it was Rajarshi. Rajarshi was also dramatized as Sacrifice. Here Tagore shows a conflict between the orthodox on the one hand who favoured sacrifices to be offered to the goddess Kali, while on the other, were those who rejected such an inhuman custom. In these novel Jayasingha, the wachman of the temple, who is torn between his conscience and blind religious faith kills himself at the alter of the goddess. The priest Raghupati who firmly believes in sacrifice, is shocked when he sees his faithful servant dead at the end of the novel. He undergoes a sudden change and realizes his mistake. Tagore in his novel asserts the importance of living creatures who were being killed in the name of sacrifice to the goddess. He shows how the superstitious and blind faith makes the people irrational and cruel. There is a strong appeal to the countrymen to substitute the blind and cruel custom by the religion of love, conscience and kindness. In this novel, Tagore is free from the spell of Bankimchandra who though being a great novelist had some myopic views pertaining to religion and society. In Rajarshi

although he rejects the orthodox views, he continues to follow his techniques.

It is with Choker Bali or Binodini ( or Eyesore or Sand in the Eye ) that Tagore proves himself a mature novelist. He shows the inner struggles of the characters. He as a novelist knows and understands the problem of woman's destiny. There is a deep study of the social scene in Bengal. He also examines the attitude of society at large towards the emergence of a new woman in the then contemporary India. He peeps into their minds and reveals their inner conflicts and desires too.

Unlike Tagore's other novels, Naukadubi or The Wreck (1903 -05) is a novel describing unusual happenings. Here he depicts the social customs, yet, the novel does not reveal any attempt to dig out the truth. The main characters become the victims of fate and social customs both. The hero has to marry a girl chosen by his father, though he loves someone else. He does not look at bride during wedding ceremony. While going home, during the journey, he had to face a storm in the river. The boats capsize in a whirlwind of the river, after their rescue a bridegroom goes with another's bride, mistaking her as his wife, who, in fact, had died in the accident. He realizes his mistake and searches for her real husband. Such a tale was innovative but not significant.

Tagore's mental interaction with the social conditions gave birth to his novel Gora, the "grand novel"

according to Sukumar Sen, "in which the problem of the individual of the society and of the state are intertwined".

( Sen : 284 )

Tagore could not keep himself aloof from the main stream of life with its socio-economic and political problems. Here the protagonist Gora resounds Tagore. Gora after passing his M.A. Examinations began to champion the cause of Hinduism against the Brahmo movement. The true love between Gora and Sucharita; between Binoy and Lolita are also developed against all such socio-political background. Gora is not only a revivalist, but a conservative Hindu too. Gora is shown as a symbol of the rising nationalism of the early twentieth century in India. He represents the aspirations and sentiments of the educated Bengalis of his age, who agitated against the injustice and arrogance of the British rulers. To Gora everything that is Indian is sacred and everything that is Indian is to be interpreted in terms of undiluted Hinduism. Tagore however, makes all his love for Hinduism, and his enthusiasm for Hinduism look ridiculous by putting him in an ironical situation. Gora does not know that in the world of his dreams about Hindu religion, he is an untouchable as he is an Irish boy orphaned during the mutiny of 1857 and brought up by the Brahmin family. His real identity is disclosed to him just when he is getting ready to receive the title of 'The Light of the Hindu Religion' in a ceremony organized by the Hindu youths from all over the country. The revelation makes him upset in the beginning, but



then he regains his balance of mind and says to Paresh Babu in excitement,

Today I am really an Indian! In me there is no longer any opposition between Hindu, Musalman, and Christian. Today every caste in India is my caste, the food of all is my food. ( 406 )

He feels immense joy and surprise as he has come out of darkness to the light and the open air. There are other characters like Anandamoyi, Binoy, Paresh Babu, Sucharita and Lolita, who follow the true path. They belong to the opposite sects but do not allow their religious views to create a gulf between a man and another man. Thus, in Gora the poet and patriot used the twin themes of love and politics with an incomparable craftsmanship. Kabir observes in this regard thus,

As we analyse Gora we realise why the novel has been described as perhaps the most difficult of literary forms. It includes not only one story or more but also discussions, lectures, reflections by the writer, social thought, politics, religion, philosophy, science and contemporary

history. If poetry educates our emotions,  
the novel sheds light on the totality of life.

( Kabir : 60 )

Tagore's other major novel The Home and The World (1914-16, English edition 1919) has also politics at its backdrop. It revolves around Nikhil the husband; Bimla, the wife; and Sandip, a friend of the family who is ambitious and selfish too. These major characters narrate the stories of their own. Nikhilesh or Nikhil tries hard to uphold the perennial values of truth, love and non-violence. Neither nationalism nor any other ideal is dearer to him than 'truth'. Sandip, on the contrary, has the 'aim'. In order to achieve that he is ready to destroy values of all sorts, Bimla is a symbolic projection of 'Indian masses', credulous and coy, torn between ages-old values at home and the misleading, alluring call of the world outside. She is inspired by her husband to see and interact with the outer world. Nikhil never used his power and never believes that a woman should have unquestioned love for husband. He thought himself, "If we meet and recognize each other, in the real world, then only will our love be true". ( 18 )

In fact, it is his democratically human attitude. Bimla, of course, is a devoted wife and hesitated to communicate with the world out side, but it is Sandip who, with his eloquence takes Bimla under his spell. Painfully, Nikhil realizes the situational gravity, but faces truth quite calmly and waits for Bimla to come back to his true love.

Sandip is crafty; he knows how to win the hearts of women. He succeeds in winning Bimala's hearts with his gift of the gab, and his show of fiery patriotism. The moment she realized his evil and dark desires, she finds him utterly selfish. Now she goes back to Nikhil who waited with patience to see the distracted Bimla to come back to her senses! Thus, the novel states that there is no place for force or tactics in love, and a gift of freedom must make a person conscious of freedom! Tagore emphasizes that love and truth become victorious in the face of violence and death. Furthermore, Tagore displays his rejection of nationalism, as it goes against his sense of internationalism. The novel was published in 1916, a crucial time both for India and the world at large. The nationalists led the people towards all sorts of violence, they aimed at the 'end', disregarding the 'means'. Tagore was dismayed and he withdrew himself from the political scene. The novel The Home and The World is perhaps an artistic explanation of his feelings regarding the world of violence and also the political criticism that he was coming across. Tagore symbolically expressed his vision of Indian's path of independence and development.

Tagore's Shesher Kavita ( Farewell, My Friend ) was written about twelve years after the publication of The Home and The World. In 1928, Tagore was about seventy years old and no passionate work would be expected from a man of that age but here Tagore deals with the theme of love from beginning to end. Amit Rai is the protagonist. He is the most wanted bachelor of the social circle in Calcutta, as he is rich

and refined with a qualification of bar-at-law. He flirts with the modern girls like Lily Ganguly, Bimi Bose and Katie Mitter, however does not think of marriage. Amit feels that all those girls lack something or the other, but he does not know what it was. The girl of his dreams is not like a woman of flesh and blood, therefore Amit looks like a young man who is after shadows rejecting substance. Once Amit's car almost runs into that of Labanya's in a curved mountain road of Shillong. In the background of mystic nature, Labanya's beauty appears in her full glory before Amit and he finds his aspired love. Labanya too, falls in love with Amit.

Amit, now sees life in a new light and says, 'I have discovered everything anew, even myself'. ( 31 ) Labanya is not merely emotional but also conscious of the realities of life. She could not accept Sobhanlal's love, though she had a soft corner in her heart for Sobhanlal. Labanya is right when she feels that Amit is a dreamer who cannot bear the responsibilities of married life. Her judgement leads her to conclude that she does not want to marry and cause unhappiness. Amit, on the other hand, attempts to win her favour. At the same time Ketali Mitra or Keti Mitter who is Amit's former fiancée strangely enters into the scene. Labanya is shocked but generously she implores Amit to accept Ketali as his life partner. Coincidentally Shobhanlal's letter reaches Labanya during this time. Love changes everything that's why Amit's decision to marry Ketaki and Labanya's to marry Sobhanlal is infact the progress of love. Amit realizes that

there are two types of love: love in separation and in union, both the lovers bid farewell to each other. The novel may seem to be a novel of overidealised love to some readers, yet it is unquestionably a sharp and modern poetic novel with romantic background, which is popular among Bengali young readers and critics even today.

Chaturanga ( 1916 ) is a short novel by Tagore .It is also one of his best and suggestive novels. Chaturanga was written after the completion of Gora and before the beginning of The Home and The World. Thus the themes of Gora i.e. of religion, nationalism and love reappear here; and the fictional technique of The Home and The World is used here first time. There are only four chapters and four characters in the novel, one of them narrates the story. Though it is a story of usual love triangle, the main focus of the theme lies in the interface of love with spiritualism and the consequent crisis. Jagmohan is an educated and rationalist man whose heart is very noble which has made him a positive humanist. He is an atheist but a humanist while his brother Harimohan is religious, but too mean and orthodox. Sachish, the main character of the novel, subscribes to Jagmohan's philosophy rather than that of his father Harimohan's. Purandhar, Sachis's elder brother, inherits his father's qualities but Sachis becomes free from all sorts of religious dogma. Jagmohan sees his god in the downtrodden people and serves them selflessly while Harimohan worships his traditional idol gods only. His eldest son seduces a poor girl and casts her aside. Sachis comes to

know about the girl and takes her to his uncle's house. Sachis wants to marry her just because he wants to compensate her loss, but the innocent girl prefers death, as her seducer is not ready to marry her. Sachis's uncle Jagmohan dies while nursing the victims of plague, now Sachis is in search of someone who can fill the void in his life. He becomes the disciple of a so called *Vaishnav* saint swami Lelananda. Sachis tries to escape from emotional bondage but a young widow Damini distracts his attention. Damini is unwillingly a disciple of the Swami who believes in life without the coat of spiritualism or idealism. She disturbs Sachis with her youthful vivacity. Damini loves Sachis but he does not succumb to her.

Tagore creates a situation where Sachis is alone in the dark cave and has forgotten the way out. All his attempts are in vain and he feels as if the primordial beast had put him into its salivating mouth. He tries to sleep in fright. At that time. Damini enters the cave and gets hold of Sachis feet and sighed Sachis mental stat was disturbed, so he could not come out of fear and disgust. She was the primordial beast for him and he kicked her again and again. Damini fled away and after that incident she avoided Sachis.

Now Sachis realizes that he is not free from the feeling of love towards Damini but he does not want to stray away from the path of spiritual liberation. Sachis leaves the *Ashram* but he realizes that in her company only he can perform his duties better and he comes back. Tagore shows that love may excite the body but becomes spiritual when it

becomes intense. Damini challenges the metaphysical world of the swami and his troupe where everything is unreal, as it does not refer to human life. Sachis, in spite of his love for Damini wants her to release him from her spell. Damini understands that love is like a hurdle on the way of Sachis's spiritual quest, so she gives up her desire to get his love and marries Sribilash, the narrator of the novel, who profoundly loves Damini. Damini makes his life happier but not for long as she could not recover from an injury she received in the cave. She dies but releases Sachis from her spell as well as the so called religious path which was far away from humanitarian world.

In 1929, Tagore wrote Jogajog. The novel Sesher Kavita (Farewell, My friend) and Jogajog were written almost simultaneously but both are totally different in theme, style, treatment and even language. Tagore ambitiously planned his novel Teen Purus or Three generations as a trilogy but could not concentrate for long on such a long story and the same characters. That's why the novel became a story of one generation only and was retitled as Yogayog or Jogajog. In Jogajog Kumudini is a daughter of an aristocrat who marries a self made millionaire industrialist, Madhusudhan. Madhusudhan believes that money can buy anything and his crude belief makes him think that he can possess his wife also with his money power. Very soon, he discovers that he can possess his wife physically but the real Kumudini goes away from his grip. Madhusudhan is ruthless and violent while

Kumudini is lovely, culture-conscious and obedient. Though Madhusudhan is brutal toward her, she is conscious about her duties as a traditional Hindu woman and yields to his humiliations. Madhusudhan cannot understand her, but a gradual change comes in his attitude to her. The seemingly fragile woman determined to worship her husband but her tolerance strongly proved that she had spiritual armour and her husband could never hurt her from within. Bhabani Bharracharya rightly points out,

The great power of Jogajog is in its clear portrayal of psychological subtleties. It is from one point of view, the most satisfying of all the novels Tagore has written.

( Bhattacharya : 101 )

Tagore's Dui Bon ( Two Sisters ) (1933) is an interesting novel where he defines woman. He begins the novel with these words,

Women are of two kinds the mother kind and the beloved kind- so I have heard some learned men say. If a comparison may be drawn with the seasons, the mother is the rainy season. She brings the gift of water and of fruit, tempers the



heat and dissolving from the heights  
drives away the drought. She fills with  
plenty. The beloved, on the other hand, is  
the spring. Deep its mystery, sweet its  
enchantment. Its restless rocks the blood  
into waves and swings over into the jewel  
chamber of the mind. Where the solitary  
string of the golden *Vina* is lying muter,  
waiting for the vibration to set the body  
and the mind rising in some wordless  
melody. ( 7 )

On this proposition, the theme of the novel rests. Sarmila and Urmimala- the two sisters represent the nature of a mother and that of a beloved in woman. Kriplani states "As if the author is trying to show that a man seeks in woman both mother and sweetheart. Lucky the man who can find both in one." ( Kriplani : 372 )

There are four characters: Sarmila, Nirad, Urmimala and Sasanka whose attitudes to love have been revealed in each chapter. Tagore devotes four chapters for this and in course of time Nirad disappears and there remains a clear triangle of love with Sarmila-Sasanka-Urmimala. Sarmila is a mother like woman, who looks after nothing in return. She is so possessive that sometimes Sansaka gets angry and disgusted with it. Sasanka gets everything yet he does not get the pleasure his heart craves for. When Sarmila financed him

to build up a company of his own he expressed his reluctance to accept her money. Sarmila is well-aware of masculine ego, therefore she tackles him.

Sasanka accepted the money and prospered more and more. Though it was all because of Sarmila and her encouragement, he became workaholic and moved away from Sarmila. Now he does not find time to take part in his own birthday celebration or marriage anniversary. On Sarmila's request he uses the harsh words: "Look here Sarmila, don't ever try to set me up as a play thing and call in the crowd to watch you play." ( 23 )

Sarmila, who never cared for herself, once fell ill. She did not want Sasanka to be helpless so she called for her younger sister Urmimala to look after the comforts of Sasanka. Urmi's nature is like 'spring', she is a vivacious young lady who was betrothed to Nirad- A care-ridden and orthodox man. Urmi was ready to go to her sister's house as she wanted to attend her sick sister and also to get rid of the tough routine life at home prescribed by Nirad. Here at Sarmila's house, Sasanka and Urmimala, instead of attending Sarmila, cause graver pain to her. Under the spell of infatuation they both forget their duties and the existence of Sarmila too. Sarmila had a deep insight to see what may happen and it was more painful to her than the disease. At last, Urmimala realized that she was the apple of discord in Sasanka's household, so she went back to concentrate on her studies to accomplish the work for which she had taken an oath before her father. At

that time, Nirad's letters demanding money for his research and conveying his intention to break his betrothal with Urmi as he wanted to marry a European woman were received by her. The second letter was the bliss of freedom for her. Nirad's ignoble nature came to light, yet Urmi was happy and her joy shows that Urmi's mind was forcibly tied to an orthodox sham. Again her love for Sasanka became more intense as the forbidding force gave way. She returned to Sasanka's place. Sasanka's business collapsed, as he lost the sense of duty. Sarmila informed Urmi about that, as a result, Urmi broke down and realized her mistake. The large-hearted sister Sarmila forgave her sister turned rival. Urmi tried to be away from Sasanka so she stuck to Sarmila's Sick bed. Now Sasanka frequented the sick room.

Sarmila could not see the pathetic condition of her husband. Though it was painful to her, she decided to change roles by entrusting Urmimala to see Sasanka happy. After she declared her decision a miracle occurred, she suddenly got recovered after being treated by a quack with medicine. She asked Urmi to stay back with her as co-wife. But Urmi left, never to return. She went to Europe to be a doctor. Urmi's disappearance proves her a 'richly responsible' character. Yet the reunion of Sasanka and Sarmila seems to be unconvincing. It is true that Tagore did not show the inner conflict or feelings of Sasanka while going back to Sarmila, even while ignoring the noble wife and clinging to her sister,

yet it is an exquisite and one of the best of Tagore's fictions. Kripalani observes that,

The author has tried to face boldly the psychological tangle caused by a conflict of loyalties, loyalty to married love, free and unfettered without sentimentalizing and without moralizing. ( Kripalani : 373 )

Malancha ( The Garden ) (1933) is again a novel which talks of the tangled relationship based on the same theme of tangled love with two women trying to gain the love of a married man. In Two Sisters the sick but devoted wife invites her sister to look after the comforts of her husband, while in The Garden the husband invites his cousin to look after his work and nurse his loving wife. Niraja was happily married to a florist who knew that her husband loved his nursery garden passionately. She shared his interests, devoted herself for that and was able to get her husband's love. Friends envied the happiest couple, but the fate was more jealous and after ten years of such happiness, Niraja suddenly became bed ridden. Now she could not share her husband's work in the garden. The garden, which she tended with her husband, Aditya, was the source of her pleasure and pride. In the ten years of their happy life, they lacked one thing, that is, a child. The expectation to have her own child led Niraja towards her ill luck. There was a hope to get child but a surgical operation

became inevitable and the child had to left to die to save the life of mother. Now poor Niraja who was bed ridden could just sit and watch the blissful beauty of the garden that was symbolic of her youthful life. She had the sweet memories of her lost happiness. Aditya could not understand the mental condition of her sick wife and called for his cousin Sarala to look after the garden at Niraja's place. Niraja who identified herself with the garden, did not like the step to call some one else to help Aditya at her place. She discovers a rival in Sarala. Her heart, once so broad and generous became narrow in jealousy and anger. Sarala was aware of her own limitations but Niraja's taunt made her aware of her love for Aditya. Sarala knew how to suffer than to react and express, so she suffers from all sorts of mental agony. Until Aditya expressed his love for her, she never did so. She was being humiliated by Niraja, but kept intact her respectful attitude towards her. Sarala became more generous and richer in her sense of understanding beside Niraja's narrowness and poverty of heart. Here in the novel all the characters experience poverty of spirit, which lead them to the tragic end. Though they pine for love, there is an absence of a true picture of the warmth of love in the novel.

Tagore's distaste for 'the politics of violence' reappears as the novel Char Adyay (Four Chapters) in 1934. The theme of human values and political ideals, what has been discussed 18 years ago in his novel The Home and the World, is discussed in Four Chapters in a different setting. Indranath,

a reincarnation of Sandip in The Home and The World is a professor turned politician. He utilises Ela as a catalytic agent to trap young boys by her beauty and inspire them to deeds of sacrifice for the country. However, with Atindra Ela's fake game of love turned true in their first meeting in a steamer. Atindra joins the group of revolutionaries where he clashes with Batu, another admirer of Ela. In the second chapter Ela and Atindra feel strong love for each other but also find themselves chained by the terrible vow of revolution. In the next chapter, Ela is seen defying Indranath's orders. Atindra tells Ela bluntly that it is a false doctrine to believe that the life of the country can be saved by killing its soul. Indranath hypnotizes the innocents to become rebels. The hot blooded activists decide to devote themselves for the country in a violent way, but they repent when they find their lives and love at stake. Ela is pining for Ati's love but she is caged by the vow of revolution. She says,

I had no choice, Ontu. I had already sworn to devote myself to my country, not to keep anything for myself alone. My betrothal was to my country. ( 30-31 )

When Indranath foresees the danger of Ela's arrest and its aftermath, he wants to get rid of her. Mercilessly he asks Atin, her lover to kill her. Batu blackmailed her and offered to save her life if she married him. Ela preferred death

to life without love. When she learnt from Atin that he had been ordered by Indranath to kill her, she was happy to be killed by him. She requests him,

Kill me, Ontu, kill me with your own hands. I couldn't wish for a happier end.....Kill me, Atin, kill me now.....Don't have any qualms..... Am I not yours, wholly yours, even in death? Take me Don't let their unclean hands touch my body, for this body belongs to you.

( 85-86 )

Ela didn't want the painless and senseless death, so she told Atin to throw away chloroform. Although there is political background depicted here, Tagore said that the theme of the novel is the love of Ela and Atindra. Tagore felt that we could not judge lovers in isolation as individuals as they interact with their socio cultural background. Buddhadeva Bose also mentions in this regard that,

Tagore did more to Bengali prose than any other writer before or after him; starting modestly in the footsteps of Bankimchandra he ended by changing his style so radically that gap between Bankimchandra's early worked and

Tagore's later ones may appear to be not  
of one but several centuries.( Bose :108 )

### References

- Bhattacharya, Bhabani, "Tagore as a Novelist", Rabindranath Tagore, A centenary Volume, New Delhi: The Sahitya Akademi, 1861-1961.
- Bhattacharjee, Binoy, "Tagore as a social reformer", Universality of Tagore, Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1991.
- Bose Buddhadeva, "Rabindranath Tagore And Bengali Prose", A centenary volume, New Dehli: The Sahitya Akademi, 1861-1961.
- Kabir, Humayun, The Bengali Novel, Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Kripalani, Krishna, Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography, London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Sen, Sukumar, The History of Bengali Literature, New Delhi: The Sahitya Akademi, 1979.
- Tagore, Rabindranath, Gora, Trans. W.W. Pearson from Gora (1910), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002
- \_\_\_\_\_. Farewell, My Friend, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Sesher Kavita (1929), Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Two Sisters, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Dui Bon (1933), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Four Chapters, Transl. Surendranath Tagore from Char Adhayay (1934), Calcutta: VisvaBharati, 1943.





WOMAN, WITH the grace of your fingers you touched  
my things and order came out like music.  
- Tagore

## CHAPTER – 4

### DIFFERENT FACETS OF WOMAN IN TAGORE'S NOVELS

Tagore is a great portrayer of woman and has portrayed her in various roles and natures. Some of the leading facets of woman as they emerge from his novels are as mentioned below.

( A ) Married Woman :

(a) Traditional :

- (1) Asha (Eyesore)
- (2) Kamala (The Wreck)
- (3) Sarmila (Two Sisters)

Asha :- A shy and conventional woman

Asha represents the traditional Indian woman of late nineteenth century, who is a simple, meek and coy young girl. She is illiterate and not smart like Binodini

who is not only a beautiful but also a talented and educated girl. Asha is a typical Indian woman who is reserved and traditional in expressing her feelings. Although she is ignorant in the art of love, she conquers her love with her simplicity. She is an orphan girl, who has been brought up by her uncle Anukul Babu. Unfortunately, like most of the late nineteenth century Indian girls she could not receive modern education. Although she is inept and unlettered she is sweet and innocent. Ashalata, as her name itself suggests, is as tender and lively as creeper that awakens a hope. Her uncle does not want to spend anything on dowry as he bore the brunt of bringing her up. Annapurna, Asha's aunt is a true well wisher who wishes to get her married to Bihari. Bihari is a worthy young man who is ready to perform a simple and inexpensive marriage. Bihari who has respect for Annapurna has empathy for Asha, however, it is also the charm of Asha's beauty that makes Bihari to love her at first sight. Bihari also feels that she may be like her aunt Annapurna, he ruminates, "she reminds one of her aunt. Her nature must be equally sweet." ( 9 )

Although Bihari's hope and Annapurna's plans were powdered to dust as Mahendra desired to marry Asha, they had to give up before Mahendra's insistence. For Asha, Mahendra was as foolish as Bihari and the vice versa, as she had not even thought to have a choice.

Asha accepts everything in a natural way and in time, becomes 'the darling of her devoted husband.' Asha at her in-law's house, experiences the love of the affectionate husband, which hitherto has been unknown to her. An orphan girl like Asha whose husband showers his love on her like anything, becomes forgetful of her duties as daughter-in-law. She is blinded with the light of pleasure. Their over indulgence made Rajlaxmi, her mother-in-law, angry and jealous. Once She said to Annapurna, her sister-in-law,

Please go up and have look at your darling niece. See the ways of her ladyship in her lordly parental home.....

( 18 )

The possessive mother could not see her daughter-in-law snatching her son from her. Rajlaxmi could not bear with the couple and had gone to her village. She also wanted to test her son's love for her but she could see that Mahendra was not willing to leave her wife for a moment. Even Annapurna was displeased and left for Benaras. Asha, who was not efficient to perform her household duties, made mess of everything she was conscious of her ineptitude and was ashamed of it.

All the rooms in the house were in disorder. It was difficult to find anything

when required. The surgical instruments on Mahendra's table found their way into the kitchen where they were used for cutting vegetable until they finally disappeared no one knew where. Mahendra's medical notebook served as a hand fan for lighting the kitchen fire and was soon reduced to ashes. These mishaps gave endless amusement to Mahendra, but Asha felt more and more crestfallen. ( 33 )

When Rajlaxmi came back; Binodini also came with her. Binodini is a young widow who is smart, educated, efficient and beautiful too. Actually she is the same woman who was spurned by Mahendra. Mahendra rejected the proposal so Binodini was married off to a gentleman who passed away soon after their marriage as he had a liver problem. She has come with a revengeful purpose. Asha is an eyesore for her, as Mahendra married her. Binodini proves herself skillful in household duties and does every thing, which may undermine Asha and her right as the daughter in law of the family. She deliberately shows how superior she is to Asha in all respects and Asha is too innocent to understand all her tactics. In fact, Asha has been used as a decoy by Binodini. When Asha sees Binodini who is very beautiful

as well as skillful in cooking, nursing, interior decoration and household management, she develops esteem for her. She also feels inferior to Binodini, naively becomes her friend and tries to learn her skills. Asha herself introduces the love-thirsty widow to her husband, Mahendra ! She herself allows Binodini to look after her husband during her temporary absence. Thus, Asha unknowingly becomes the puppet to fulfill Binodini's evil designs.

Asha's simplicity and beauty have fascinated Bihari at the first sight. Bihari could not marry her but his love for Asha remains platonic. Infact he does not blame others for he could not get Asha. He, as a true lover can't see Asha unhappy. When Mahendra dejected Asha for Binodini, he supported Asha. Asha on the other hand, loves no one but her husband Mahendra. It is never explicit that Asha loves Bihari because she is never conscious that she can have any such feeling for Bihari. On the contrary, she does not like Bihari coming frequently and discussing any domestic matter with Mahendra. Asha does not even appreciate Mahendra's habit of cracking jokes with Bihari at her expense. Her psyche is revealed in the novel. For example, when Mahendra mentions about Bihari's previous engagement with her she feels disgusted,

Incident such as this only irritated Asha and strengthened her prejudice against Bihari. The fact that at one time she was almost engaged to him made her self conscious in his presence. ( 22 )

Sometimes readers feel that Asha's resentment is a kind of fear which makes her conscious in presence of Bihari. She seems to be restraining her love for Bihari but Asha , like most of Indian women, worships and loves her husband devotedly. Her heart can never accept that it might have throbbed for Bihari rather than Mahendra. Her anger for Bihari may be called a sense of tradition of an Indian woman.

When Binodini takes Mahendra under the spell of her vicious love, Asha overcomes all her weaknesses. She grows up under adverse circumstances, remaining calm and poised amidst calamities. Besides asserting her rightful position in the house, she also wins her mother in law over to her side. In spite of her true love for her husband, she has no compunction in treating him with contempt he deserves. Further more, she overcomes her coyness in her dealing with Bihari, Now she has the courage to forbid a stupefied Mahendra to enter his mother's room till Bihari Thakurpo steps in to see her first because Bihari proved himself a dutiful son who cared for Mahendra's mother.

Asha's maturity into a self-possessed housewife is the result of her self scrutiny which compels Binodini, her rival to yield. Thus, a raw and shy young woman becomes an efficient woman. Even Mahendra, who dejected her, was surprised to see her in different role.

He went into his own room wondering at this new Asha in action. In this new Asha there was no fear, no abjectness, no tongue-tied helplessness. This Asha knew her rightful place and stood her ground firmly without having to learn abjectly on Mahendra. He could ignore her as wife but could not help respecting her as the daughter-in-law of the house. ( 200 )

Asha's evolution makes her able to win the respect and admiration from everyone, especially her mother-in-law, who sympathises with her. Mahendra returns home as he knows that he shall get the peace, comfort and affection, which are infinitely sweet. If Asha forgives him it is not her fear of society but her true love. It is woman in Asha who loves Mahendra from within. Now, her love is not blind and naïve but the realized love. Thus Tagore shows another facet of this woman that denotes modernity to her character.



Kamala :- A simple and determined woman

Tagore's Naukadubi (1903-1905) later translated into English as The Wreck is a popular novel, which is a shocking story of love told against the contemporary social background. Kamala who appears in the novel is not a distinct kind of woman that Tagore shows in his other novels, yet he conveys the faith of a traditional Indian woman through the character of Kamala.

Kamala enters in the novel as a girl-wife who has been mistaken by Ramesh as his wife after the storm in the river. As the novel is filled with "Piles of Surprises", we come to know that Kamala also has not seen her husband at the time of her wedding so she too mistakes Ramesh as her husband.

Kamala was an orphan girl who was brought up by her uncle. Though born and bred in a remote village, Kamala was a cultured girl with active habits. As Tagore believes that woman as soon as enters her own home she performs her duties flawlessly, Kamala, too, became a very efficient house-wife from the moment she took up the family affairs in her charge. In her dress she was elegant and in her behaviour she was courteous. She could impress one and all including Ramesh. Ramesh, who didn't want to marry anyone else except Hemnalini, had to pay attention to such a beautiful wife. Ramesh heard before his marriage that his would be wife Susila

was not beautiful but when he saw Kamala after the boat-wreck, considered her as very beautiful.

Ramesh, however, came to know that he was not her husband therefore he kept a safe distance from her. Kamala could not understand the change in Ramesh's behaviour. She could not feel free with him and felt dismayed at times. But a husband is, after all a husband! For Kamala, he was her husband, she could hardly find fault with him. She could notice Ramesh's decision to put her in the boarding school yet she did not protest as her husband is like a God for her. Kamala gradually learns to show her disliking for Ramesh's decisions but it took some time.

Kamala was a young woman with youthful yearnings. She wanted to enjoy the company of her husband whom she had recently married. She had neither mother nor a mother-in-law to whom she can reveal her heart. There is no one to teach her how can she get Ramesh's company more and more. She is so shy and a tradition steeped woman that she cannot ask her husband directly about his aloofness. In fact, she was tortured at heart as Ramesh kept her at an arm's length. She could not understand clearly but she felt like weeping so many times. Everything seemed dull and gloomy to her, especially when she had been sent to boarding school.

Kamala, even in such a state of agony did not forget her duties as a wife. While traveling in a steamer, she discharged her duties as a devoted wife of Ramesh. She took care of every little thing of Ramesh. She was so adept that she knew how to manage and spend the money given to her by Ramesh. At what time she should ask for the things or money she needed; she knew it very well. Her relation with Umesh, her helping hand, shows her innate qualities as a mother though she was too young.

Kamala realized her poor condition more when she had met uncle Chakrabartti's wife and daughter at his house. Chakrabartti's wife asked so many questions in the very first meeting about Kamala's domestic life. These questions were so difficult for Kamala as she little knew about Ramesh and his family. Tagore states that Kamala became more conscious about her condition at Gazipur, at uncle Charkrabartti's house,

All these questions made Kamala feel how unusual her position was, and how unworthy and inefficient she was, as a wife. She knew almost nothing about her husband's affairs and she felt confused and insecure. ( 52 )

Sailaja, uncle chakrabartti's married daughter also met her. She was a very gay and amiable woman who kept on talking about her husband all the time. Her intention was always to share her happiness with others rather than to make them jealous. Tagore states,

As soon as the ice was broken, Sailaja began to talk of her husband, and it was obvious that this was the all important subject to her. While the conversation flowed happily on it was. Sailaja's ship that sailed merrily along with its cargo of happiness, Kamala's empty boat that stuck miserably in the shallows. ( 53 )

The comparison made her more and more unhappy and confused, yet it was her success that made Ramesh to think of acceptance. Ramesh made up her mind to accept Kamala as his wife as he could not help thinking about her. Ramesh was, no doubt in a dilemma as he could not find out Kamala's real husband, Nalinaksha. Ramesh could not forget Hemnalini whom he loved from the deep of his feart. It is Kamala's innocence and of course Ramesh's sense of duty that made Ramesh to think of intimacy what a wife expects from a husband. He wrote a very loving letter to Kamala but Tagore does not help them to unite. Before the love-letter reached,

another letter addressed to Hemnalini was found by Kamala while cleaning her house. The unposted letter written by Ramesh revealed the bitter reality. The information transported her into a dark and dismal world. Her tradition steeped heart and mind were filled with self-reproach as she thought that she was living with a man who was not her husband! Her heart was filled with reproach for Ramesh who played husband maintaining a safe distance. Tagore reveals her pain,

Shame pierced Kamala's heart like a dagger. The disgrace would cling to her all her life. There was no escape. ( 64 )

For a moment, Kamala thought of committing suicide, but the next moment a woman in her awoke and she made up her mind to find out her husband. One may feel surprised that how could Kamala leave Ramesh whom she loved once, for the sake of a stranger. Her faith is so profound that she begins her search for Nalinaksh with that confidence that he must have survived the wreck and would accept her as his wife. Through Kamala Tagore shows that a woman with pure heart can achieve anything she hopes for.

Now Kamala's individualism is seen as she is resolute to search for her real husband without seeking anyone's advice. In fact she showed the glimpses of her

individualism when she insisted on going to Gazipur. A robust optimism propels her. She knows that she will have to face all kinds of hardship but her faith will not be shaken. On her way she met a woman Nabinkali in Benares who needed a woman to cook at her house. Kamala began her work there. Once Nabinkali's husband was ill so she sent for the best doctor of Benares who was Nalinaksha, Kamala's lost husband. Kamala saw him for the first time,

Kamala waited in the courtyard with her body and brain on fire. How could such a man be the husband of such a miserable wretch as herself! There was something god-like in the calm beauty of his face. Her sufferings had not been in vain! She bowed her head in thankfulness. ( 90 )

Now Kamala enters her husband's home in the guise of a maid-servant. Kamala's devotion makes us believe that her love for Nalinaksha falls into the category of *Bhakti*. At her husband's house Kamala learns that her husband, unaware of her living presence, is making arrangements for his marriage with Hemnalini. She is not perturbed, rather she fills that her happiness lies in his happiness. She wants to serve him forever as she does not want to receive, but only to give. Gradually,

Hemnalini comes to know about Kamala as Nalinaksha's wedded wife and prompts her to assert her place but Kamala was hesitant. In course of time, and through her actions and service, she, however, discloses her identity, and gets back her due.

Kamala is so innocent and loving and therefore wherever she goes, she makes the people around her very fond of her. Even Ramesh, though he loved Hemnalini, accepted in a letter to Hem that Kamala left a sweet memory though they had not lived like man and wife. Kshemankari, Nalinaksh's mother likes her to that extent that she wishes if she were her daughter-in-law. In fact, she liked Kamala more than Hemnalini for Nalinaksha. She says to Kamala, "Anyone can learn things from books, but not many are as sweet as you are!" Kshemankari, by saying so, compares Hemnalini with Kamala and Kamala is more lovable for her.

Kamala is a traditional Indian woman who can set the world in order. She, with her steadfastness and devotion, could win over Nalinaksha, she does injustice to Ramesh but it is righteous on the part of an Indian woman like Kamala.

.....as soon as she learns of the wreck she is eager to return to Nalinaksha. Ramesh is totally forgotten, as something foreign.

( Ghose: 72 )

Though her mind and mood are revealed in the novel, no psychological conflict is shown while leaving Ramesh as if to show how traditional Kamala is. Kamala's reconciliation with Nalinksha brings an end to her journey to reach to her husband. It is Nalinaksha who makes the reconciliation smooth. Thus Kamala represents the Indian woman who is traditional, simple and pure-hearted yet firm and deterministic. Kamala represents love in union. KH. Kunjo Singh states,

Kamala excels all the traditional heroines of Tagore like Asha, Sharmila and Niraja, by her qualities of humility, self-restraint and self-effacement. Tagore seems to believe that such women can bring the much needed stability to the restless domestic world dominated by men.

( Singh : 60 )

Sarmila :- A caring and devoted woman

Tagore's Two Sisters ( Dui Bon – 1933 ) reveals his deep insight into woman's heart. He, in most of his novels shows two different facets of woman. He shows the mother-kind wins over the beloved kind in the same woman. The woman in love may forget her existence or others' too. She may not care for anything yet she would at last incline towards propitiousness only. Here, in the



novel Two Sisters, Tagore shows two different facets – the mother kind and the beloved kind through two different women who are sisters. The novel is divided into four chapters, in each chapter, Tagore studies each character's attitude to love, and finely strings them into a single whole without causing any disruption to the organic growth of the novel. In course of time the 'tangle of love' becomes the 'triangle of love' with Sarmila–Sasanka–Urmimala.

Sarmila is a traditional woman who finds her salvation and happiness in the welfare and happiness of her husband Sasanka. She never thinks of her separate identity. Mother-like, she looks after all the needs of her husband, expecting nothing in return. Sasanka knows his wife Sarmila very well.

He knew full well that any negligence in the day's routine would be set right by her. To perpetuate negligence therefore had become second nature with him. ( 2 )

Sarmila's devoted love for Sasanka makes her a possessive wife. Her solicitude becomes too much at times that Sasanka is disgusted with it. Though he gets all his needs fulfilled without difficulty, he does not get pleasure that he craves for. One day he advised Sarmila,

For goodness' sake, get hold of some god or deity like that Chakravarty's wife. It's too much for me to withstand your attentions all by myself. Sharing them with a god would make it easier. The gods can stand excesses but man is frail. ( 4 )

Sasanka is an engineer who works as the district engineer. He knows that he is a government servant and he should keep safe distance from the superiors but Sarmila does not think so. She likes to see her husband stand with his head held high. For her, no one is superior to Sasanka. Though she is a house-wife she can talk to any officer for the sake of her husband and his prestige. Whenever it is necessary she can fight with the English officers too. Once she challenged the railway official and frightened the fierce-looking army officer as they had been told to vacate their reserved seats for him. It is she only, who encourages her husband to resign from the government job and to begin a business with her kinsman Mathurdada. Not only that but she also arranges for the money.

Sarmila's determination to make Sasanka a businessman rather than a government servant has emerged from her love only. She can not see injustice done to Sasanka when his promotion was reversed. Sarmila's decision for Sasanka seems to be an insult of

manliness of Sasanka but it is not so. It is her devotion and love for Sasanka that makes her to decide everything that is good for Sasanka.

Tagore shows her a woman who has no child but her motherly love is reserved for Sasanka. She takes care of every little thing of sasanka, like a mother. Sarmila always wants to see him happy as if a mother wants the welfare of her child. Sometimes the readers feel that a mother in Sarmila is ever awake which does injustice to a beloved in Sarmila. Sarmila showers her love for Sasanka yet there is something lacking which she is not aware of.

When Sarmila decides to finance Sasanka for his business, he expresses his reluctance to accept her money. She very clearly says, "I too am yours". ( 12 ) She knows that to be in love is to lose all, not only her money but also her identity, but she has not cared for. So, when Sasanka began to repay the loan with interest against formal receipt she wails,

What a pity ! .... Even in love men cannot wholly lose themselves. A portion of themselves they need must set apart for the exercise of their masculine ego.( 18 )

On the other side, Sarmila seems to be a woman whose control is evident everywhere in the house.

Even when Sasanka delayed returning from his friend's house Sarmila would send the faithful servant with lantern in his hand to call him back. By this action, she not only shows her concern for him but also expresses her displeasure. Santosh chakrabarti says, in this connection,

Her ubiquitous presence and control in husband Sasanka's life make her position as woman unique in the sense that as wife none of Tagore's women before her – Asha – (Chokher Bali), Bimala – (Ghare-Baire) or Kumudini (Yogayog) – has any control over her husband (Mahendra, Nikhikesh, Madhusudan respectively).

( Chakrabarti : 63 )

Chakrabarti's observation reveals that Sarmila is well aware of the nature of man especially her husband Sasanka. In her heart of hearts she longs for her husband's love but does not lose heart in its absence.

...in order to prioritise the ideal mother image in a wife, i.e., to flesh out an idea Rabindranath has prioritized self-denial as the basic trait in Sarmila's character.

( Chakrabarti : 64 )

Under her care and encouragement Sasanka dared to resign from the government service and established a company of his own with Mathurdada, Sarmila's kinsman. It is Sarmila's devotion only that makes Sasanka a prosperous and successful businessman. The richer he becomes the farther he moves away from Sarmila. He becomes a workaholic man. Once Sarmila arranged a grand party on Sasank's birthday, all the friends and relatives came, except Sasanka. Before the evening part Sarmila reminded him of his birthday and also requested to stay at home for the party. Sasanka's birthday, "the most festive day in her life", is not important for himself as ( 21 ) business is more important for this man. On such an occasion he went to the extent of using harsh words. "Look here, Sarmila, don't you ever try to set me up as a plaything and call in the crowd to watch you play." ( 22 )

Sarmila still continues her selfless service to Sasanka. As Sasanka has no time to observe all this, she thinks that it is man's nature. Now Sasanka is ever-busy with his work outside the home so Sarmila's devotion and care is offered to his things – the symbols of his presence! Tagore says, "With loving faith Sarmila had accepted this ruthlessness". ( 23 )

Sarmila, while serving her husband, fell seriously ill. She never cared for herself. Her sickness made a mess of everything. Sasanka was very busy as he

had two heavy contracts on hand, yet he left his work unattended. It is for the first time in their married life, Sasanka has to worry about Sarmila's health. "Leaving his work unattended he would return home and sit helplessly by her side. Gently caressing her hair he would inquire how she felt that day". ( 59 )

One may feel that Sarmila would be happy to see her ever- busy husband sitting beside her sick-bed and taking care of hers, but it is not so. Her ingrained motherliness cannot see Sasanka's helplessness. It pains her too much that her sickness is a hurdle on the way of Sasanka's work and success. At last, she sent for her younger sister Urmimala to look after the comforts of Sasanka.

Urmimala, whose name suggests "Spring" is a vivacious young lady throbbing with enthusiasm. Urmi comes to her sister's house for two reasons: first, to attend to her sick sister, second, to get rid of the tough routine life at home as prescribed by Nirad, to whom she has been betrothed.

Urmi has been called to take care of everything at Sarmila's home, especially Sasanka's comforts. Urmi enters in Sasanka's life like a spring-wind. Her mind matches perfectly with that of Sasanka's. Sasanka forgets all about his work, his wife's illness and enjoys life in Urmi's company.

Urmi, in the beginning, enjoys the domestic work in Sarmila's house. Sarmila, keeps on giving suggestions to look after Sasanka and Urmi's relationship with any kind of suspect. Urmi makes Sasanka listening to radio, go for shopping and so many activities, which Sasanka might not have done before. Urmi, too, takes interest in his work but that too becomes a joyous activity. Sasanka now ignores his duty and does not care for the loss in his business.

Sarmila realizes it very soon but she is not an ordinary woman. She sees that Urmi is not good at handling everything in the house yet she is the one who makes Sasanka happy. Though Sasanka was not provided all the comforts he used to get, he seemed very happy. Sarmila, very painfully realizes, "My absence would make some difference, but hers would create a void". ( 80 )

It is only when Mathurdada came and reported all about his business, which collapsed, Sarmila calls Urmi to her bed-side. She asks her, "Do you realize what havoc you have caused by distracting him from his work day by day? ( 101 ) Urmi breaks down and realizes her fault. The large-hearted woman, Sarmila, instead of kicking her away from her house, forgives her. Urmi now sits beside her for the whole time and makes frantic efforts to keep herself away from Sasanka. Now Sasanka frequently enters Sarmila's room. Sarmila can see

through his intension. Tagore while commenting upon Sasanka, here generalises masculine infatuation,

Only a male can be so clumsy in his infatuation as not to notice that his wife could plainly see through the motive of his frequent visits. ( 104 )

Sarmila could see that Sasanka become pale, as Urmi restrained herself from his company. Sarmila cannot see Sasanka in such pathetic condition. She is really a "goddess" as Sasanka calls her. Her love is selfless and serene so she cannot even think of herself and her expectations. As Nirad also said once to Urmi,

Sarmila-didi's love, ... is serene and deep; her care and devotion are like an act of religious merit, her duty know no holiday. It's by virtue of these that Sasanka Babu is enabled to give his whole mind to his work. ( 49 )

Sarmila never considered Sasank's business as her rival while Urmi did so. Sarmila made up her mind to repay the loss without informing Sasanka. Now the moment comes in her life to make the supreme sacrifice. She is disgusted with her life and introspects, "Why am I



lingering?" ( 109 ) Now she wants to make the sacrifice for her husband. She makes up her mind to change roles by entrusting Urmi to see Sasanka happy,

Painful, no doubt, it was to imagine another woman in her place on the other hand. She could not bear the thought Sasanka dragging on a forlorn, wretched existence, without a woman to look after this comfort. ( 108 )

Though she is a woman who can do anything for the comforts and happiness of her husband, this decision is too difficult for her to follow and tolerate. She suffers immense psychological pressure. "Her forehead wrinkled with pain, Sasanka noticed nothing." (109) Though Sasanka knows Sarmila's profound love for him, his intoxication for Urmi can't see her agony. Sarmila's condition worsened after taking such a decision and the moment comes when she declares her decision, which is the supreme sacrifice by a woman in love who knows only to give.

Tagore, then averts the situation. Sarmila who was at the verge of death, got a miraculous recovery after being treated by a quack with medicine from Tibetan roots. Sarmila was shocked as she had already asked Sasanka to marry Urmi and replace her.

How embarrassing! ... What's to be done?  
Will life saved prove in the end a greater  
calamity than death? ( 112 )

Sarmila does not want to back out from the promise she gave to Sasanka and Urmi. She decides that Urmi shall live with them. She does not care for society while taking this decision because Sasanka is the only person whose happiness is the chief and sole aim of her life. Urmimala was in a double mind as she realized her fault and saw her sister's self- service. Sasank still not realized his fault says to Urmimala: "If you abandon me now, you may well imagine what will happen to me." (113)

Sasanka is never shown as the man who suffers any conflict in his mind about Sarmila's love. He loves her and obeys her for so many years of their married life. After his wife's long illness, his love evaporates as soon as Urmi enters in his life. The decline in his love for his wife has never been observed by himself. Tagore does not show a conflict in his soul between his sense of duty and passionate desire. In fact, he shows,

The irresistibility of the pull of love in life  
and man's inevitable biological attraction  
to woman for psychophysical satisfaction.

( Chakrabarti : 65 )

Though Urmi also lost the sense of duty for some time, she suddenly awakes and disappears from their life. Now, Sasanka again like a naughty child suddenly becomes obedient and clings closer to Sarmila and cries, "Don't conceal the fact from me... that I am once again in your debt." ( 118 )

Sarmila once again feels the same love for Sasanka and forgets everything. Not only that but she also wants to learn his work and accompany him in his business. Sarmila's acceptance of Sasanka's love is not her tradition-bound decision that a wife must ignore the follies of her husband. Her love has reached to that summit that she herself leaves her possessive nature. She seems to be a traditional woman but she is something more than that. She knows everything about Sasanka's satisfaction in love. She also feels that Urmi, her sister, is not just a shadow of hers.

Though Sarmila is a possessive wife who cannot even think of anyone else at her place with Sasanka, she takes this decision. It is not just her illness, but the innate motherliness that wants to see Sasanka happy forever, makes her to take this painful decision. Tagore shows through this woman Sarmila that to give, to Serve (*Pooja*) is the ingrained quality of woman. She feels happy while giving her everything to whom she loves. For Sarmila, before Urmi, Sasanka's business had already become her rival in love. That too, Sarmila took

as the pride of man and never came on the way of his success. Sarmila is not myopic who cannot see Sasanka and Urmi's infatuation for each other. It is her love for Sasanka that does not bind Sasanka but makes him free. Sasank's reconciliation with Sarmila seems mechanical but Sarmila's true love makes everything possible and natural too. One may think about Sasank's loyalty for Sarmila but she is away from such feeling. It is not because she is a tradition bound woman who cannot think of her identity or self-respect. Sarmila's reconciliation with Sasanka is different from that of Asha's with Mahendra in ChokherBali as Asha seems to be a meek woman who thinks of society first. Sarmila is above all the doubts and questions of feminists for her love and devotion have reached to the culmination where the 'self' mingles with the one whom she loves.

(b) Reconciler of Traditional and Modern Values :

Bimala :- An emancipated woman

Bimala is the only important woman character who appears in the novel Ghare-Baire ( The Home and The World (1919)). This novel depicts the sketches of three principal characters – Bimala, her husband Nikhilesh and Sandip, Nikhil's friend, in the autobiographical manner. Bimala, who is a young lady with dark features resembles her mother, whose face was

dark but there was the radiance of holiness which made her more beautiful than the so called beautiful women. Bimala was married into a *Rajah's* house. Bimala who has lived sheltered life of a loving wife, proves herself a very devoted wife though Nikhilesh is not a man of her dreams. She says,

When I was a child, I was quite familiar with the description of the prince of the fairy story. But my husband's face was not of a kind that one's imagination would place in fairyland. It was dark, even as mine was. ( 2 )

Nikhil's love makes her proud of herself and happy too. She says,

At that time the prince of the fairy tale had faded, like the moon in the morning light. I had the prince of my real world enthroned in my heart. I was his queen.... ( 3 )

Nikhil is the only person in the family to study further and get his M.A. degree. The grandmother was the eldest person in the family and looked after Nikhil after his parents' death. Bimala is the luckiest woman in

the family because she has got a husband who is loving, pure and stainless; who has no bad habit of the *Rajahs*. Bimala's husband, Nikhil rejects the traditional notion that a woman should have unquestioned love for her husband. Ofcourse, Bimala really adores Nikhil, as her heart makes her "to worship in order to love". ( 3 )

Bimala is very happy at her husband's house. Nikhil brings all kinds of things and many coloured garments of modern fashion for Bimala. He has also arranged for a teacher whose name is Miss Gilby who is a English woman. She teaches and accompanies Bimala. The grandmother-in-law accepts all these modern ways as she loves Nikhil and his wife both but Bimala's widowed Sister-in-law becomes jealous of Bimala. Though she is more beautiful than Bimala she is deprived of all such joys of married life as her drunkard husband died very early. She scornfully blames Bimala as "A thief who had stolen a husband's love". ( 6 )

Her jealousy makes Bimala feel that women's minds are so petty but Nikhil tells her that it is the society that makes them so. Nikhil inspires and encourages Bimala to come out of her home to interact with the world outside, but she is contented with the life at home. She doesnot consider her-self as the cage-bird. Nikhil says to Bimala, "If we meet, and recognize eachother, in the real world, then only will our love be true". ( 8 )

Tagore exposes Bimala to the outer world so that she would be considered a self- realized soul. Though Nikhil wants Bimala to come out of her 'closet', it is not Nikhil but Sandip who gets success in it. Sandip is a political leader with an 'aim'. He does not care for means but for ends only. He is ever ready to destroy values if he wishes to achieve the goal. He is more an activist than a thinker. Bimala, who never accepted her husband's proposals to go out, is now ready to join *Swadeshi* movement. Sandip's fiery speech has a spell on her and she listens to the allure of the outside world. It is because Bimala is also fiery from within as Sandip is. Once she says to Nikhil, "I must burn all my foreign clothes". ( 13 ) But Nikhil is always away from such destructive activities. He said to Bimala in his reply,

You need not wear them as long as you please.....Very well, do not wear them for the rest of your life then. But why this bonfire business? ( 13 )

The dialogue shows the vast difference between Nikhil and Bimala, in their ways of thinking.

Bimala, who did not like Sandip when she saw his photograph, is now attracted towards Sandip. Bimala, who is able to judge the character of the person, is hypnotized by Sandip. When she saw Sandip's

photograph, there was something in him which she did not like. Though Sandip was splendidly handsome, Bimala could see the ugliness hidden below the handsome face. She said,

The light in his eyes somehow did not shine true. That was why I did not like it when my husband unquestioningly gave in to all his demands. I could bear the waste of money; but it vexed me to think that he was imposing on my husband, taking advantage of friendship. ( 17 )

Here, Tagore reveals the revolutionary background of 1905 Bengal coloured with *Swadeshi* and *Bandemataram*. Nikhil and Sandip both are the supporters of *Swadeshi* but there is a vast difference between them. Sandip is in favour of violence while Nikhil opposes violence in any form. Bimala is with Sandip who destroys, steals and snatches away. She calls her husband's way of supporting *Swadeshi* as, "dull, milk and watery *Swadeshi*". ( 93 )

Sandip flatters her beauty, her ideas and calls her the inspiring source for him. "You shall be our center, our inspiration". ( 33 ) Sandip knows that he can take women under his charm. Nikhil is right to judge his own friend Sandip when he thinks that Sandip's love of



country is a different phase of his covetous self-love. Bimala can't understand what has happened to her feeling of shame. She can't stop herself and gets more and more drifted towards Sandip. She says,

Sandip's hungry eyes burnt like the lamps of worship before my shine. All his gaze proclaimed that I was a wonder in beauty and power; and the loudness of his praise, spoken and unspoken, drowned all other voices in my world. Had the creator created me afresh, I wondered? Did he wish to make up now for neglecting me so long? I who before was plain had become suddenly beautiful. I who before had been of no account now felt in myself all the splendor of Bangal itself. ( 40 )

Sandip gets letters from all parts of the country. These letters are given Bimala first, for her opinion. Sandip makes her feel that she is the most responsible person in the Swadeshi movement. Thus Sandip cleverly exploits Bimala and makes her feel exalted.

Nikhil, who can see everything, feels the pain that Bimala "loves to find in men the turbulent, the

angry, the unjust". ( 30 ) Even his reverent master chandranath Babu wishes to protect Bimala from the disastrous effect of her attraction for Sandip. Nikhil has faith in his love for Bimala. He never thinks that his wife is obliged to make love to him as her inviolable duty. He thinks,

I must not lose my faith. I shall wait. The passage from the narrow to the larger world is stormy. When she is familiar with this freedom, then I shall know where my place is... Use force? But for what? Can force prevail against Truth?

( 33 )

Nikhil knows that only 'right means' leads to the right end.

Bimala is not altogether unaware of Sandip's evil designs and cunning ways, yet she is unable to free herself from his spell. Bimala, once dresses up herself with great care to tempt him and make him do what Sandip wants. But Nikhil is never ready to do anything ruinous.

Bimala says that,

It would not be tyranny for selfish gain,  
but for the sake of the country.

But Nikhil's argument is,

To tyrannise for the country is to  
tyrannise over the country.... ( 109 )

Now Nikhil's true words do not appeal to her and Bimala's false beauty does not appeal Nikhil. Nikhil still loves Bimala but painfully realizes the situational gravity and faces the bitter reality calmly. He knows that Bimala's nature can find true union with that of Sandip's. Even his sister-in-law sarcastically says that he has to pay for his modern ways, but Nikhil waits for Bimala to come back.

Bimala, who could judge Sandip from the very beginning, could not understand her fascination for Sandip. Perhaps it is her nature, which likes to give rather than to receive. From Nikhil she always receives while Sandip demands more and more from her. Once she herself expressed her nature, even before Sandip came into their life. She said about her husband's love,

His love for me seemed to overflow my  
limits by its flood of wealth and service.  
But my necessity was more for giving  
than for receiving. ( 4 )

Now Sandip demands fifty thousand rupees for the sake of the country and Bimala is ready to manage

for the money. Sandip is so tactful that not only Bimala but so many people get hypnotized by him. When Bimala sees Amulya, a very young boy, talking like Sandip, she realizes the truth. Amulya is ready to kill the watchman of the treasury to get the money, which Sandip has asked for. Bimala cannot hear Amulya calling 'pity' as 'The height of cowardice!'. ( 145 ) She says,

To hear Sandip's phrases in the mouth of this mere boy staggered me. So delightfully, lovably immature was he, of that age when the good may still be believed in as good, of that age when one really lives and grows. The Mother in me awoke. ( 146 )

The mother in Bimala stops Amulya from doing anything unmerciful or wrong, but the spell-bound woman in Bimala steals the sovereigns of gold from her home and gives them to Sandip. Sandip's greed is revealed there, and Bimala also introspects and calls herself a woman who has robbed her own home and country both. She succumbs that her existence cannot be without the true love of Nikhil. When Nikhil sets her free, she broods over such freedom,

But can freedom – empty freedom be given and taken so easily as all that? It is like setting a fish free in the sky, for how can I move or live outside the atmosphere of loving care which has always sustained me? ( 143 )

Later on, she sees Sandip's jealousy and covetousness both and releases herself from the spell of Sandip's illusive love. Bimala's intoxication disappears at the moment when Sandip's dark design is discovered. Bimala, who was ready to ignore her devotion, love and duty as a wife, now finds Sandip utterly selfish. She says,

Sandip, the wielder of magic spells, is reduced to utter powerlessness, whenever his spell refuses to work. From a king he fell to the level of a boor. Oh, the joy of witnessing his weakness! The harsher he became in his rudeness, the more did this joy well up within me. His snaky coils, with which he used to snare me are exhausted, I am free. I am saved, saved.

( 186 )

Bimala comes back to her 'home' from the stormy path of the outside 'world'. Nikhil wholeheartedly

accepts her but the disastrous journey into the world from home has left its permanent marks on it. Bimala says,

God can create new things, but has even  
He the power to create afresh that which  
has been destroyed? ( 198 )

As Tagore believes, there are two facets of any woman- beloved and mother, Bimala is the woman who comes back from her role of a beloved to a mother, and Mother is always *Kalyani* ( Propitious ).

Bimala, who is an educated, introspective, loving Indian woman, is able to come back from the disastrous way of the world. Perhaps Amulya's innocence, Nikhil's selfless love and her own inherited virtues have helped Bimala to awake from the intoxication of Sandip's love.

Bimala might have strayed from the right path but her inner self is always shown at struggle. To err is human and woman is not an angel but a human being. Bimala's innate nature could see Sandip's greediness yet she gets more and more attracted towards Sandip because Sandip could know her nature even more than Nikhil.

Bimala does not care for the society, her sister-in-law's comments and not even her loving husband

because Sandip's eloquence has bewitched her. Again, Sandip pretends to be a true patriot, who does everything for the country only, he awakens the pride of Bimala by calling her the center of his inspiration. Sandip hides his evil desires under the veil of patriotism and Bimala could not see the mask he had put on. The spell of his love is so powerful that Bimala likes to burn herself in the fire of Sandip's love. As soon as she realizes her guilt, she is able to free herself. It is the discovery of 'self', which makes her free from the delusions about Sandip's greatness. Here, Tagore shows the victory of propitious woman in Bimala. Had such a situation occurred in a western novel, perhaps the heroine might have died., Tagore also symbolises Bimala as the 'Mother India' who is able to free herself from the storms of the outer world.

( c ) A Possessive Woman :

Niraja :- A loving but possessive wife

Niraja is a possessive woman who appears in the novel The Garden ( Malancha 1933 ). The Garden and Two Sisters seem to be based on the same theme, yet The Garden is a more complex and artistically better embellished.

Niraja, the heroine of the novel and the florist Aditya's possessive wife is infact the very embodiment of love. She is a beloved-kind woman who wants to get her

husband's love intensely. "She is an active partner in her husband's love life as also the life of action".

( Chakrabarti : 67 )

Niraja cannot even think about anyone else at her place even in the garden, working with Aditya.

Tagore begins the novel with the gloomy atmosphere where Niraja is confined to her sick-bed as she is critically ill. Niraja looks back in dismay at the happy years of enjoyment that would never come back. She was married to Aditya some ten years ago and enjoyed his full love, faith and devotion all those years.

Niraja could see, from the very beginning of her married life, that Aditya loved his work, his garden. Niraja, too, started loving that garden to that extent that she saw her own 'self' in the garden. "The love of these two, ever since their wedding, had mingled in a hundred ways in the love and care of this garden. ( 117-118 )

The garden which she tended with her husband, was the source of her pleasure and pride. Her florist husband got money in abundance selling flowers in the new market. Things ran smooth in all sides, "She had more than she deserves" ( 119 ), commented her friends. Aditya's friends considered him lucky as Niraja was by his side. Niraja had everything but she had no child even after ten years of their happy married life. However, after ten years that hope was also fulfilled. Before the child arrives in their life its hope also brings the happiness in



their life. Tagore peers into Niraja's mental world at the time in the following lines,

All the motherliness welled up in her heart, suffusing the horizon of the future with the rosy hues of the dawn of a new life. Seated under a tree she busied herself with fancy garments for the newcomer. ( 120 )

Her days of happiness had reached to their climax, but God had something else in His mind. Niraja's hope turned into the grimmest tragedy with a stroke of ill luck.

A surgical operation became inevitable and the child had to be left to die to save the life of the mother. The mother, however, became pale. "The free current of her vitality seemed to have dried up". ( 120 )

Now poor Niraja sits near the window that opens unto the garden from where she watches her loving garden – the manifestation of her love for Aditya. The window also symbolizes an outlet that opens into the memory of her lost happiness. She peers into one or the other and visualizes the blissful beauty of the garden that was symbolic of her youthful life,

From the window facing her bed floated in with the warm wind the fragrance of the *Muchkunda* flowers or a breath of the orange blossoms, as though the once familiar and now far away days of her spring, were caressingly inquiring, how are you? ( 120 )

While Niraja was passing through such despondency, Aditya took a sudden step that ultimately led to the worsening of her condition. He invited Sarala, his cousin, to help him in the garden-work. Niraja did not like the idea as she had identified herself with the garden. She had realized that Aditya loved the garden with a deep passion and to enjoy his love she had to love the garden. So, from the very beginning of their married life she did all that she could, to keep the garden growing. The *Malini* ( one who tends the garden ) and *Banalaxmi* ( one who is the goddess of the forest ) rolled into one in her person. As Sarala was entrusted with taking care of the garden she feared that she would lose her identity as a wife. Her husband's love would then be usurped by Sarala just as she had taken away her rights as *Malini* and *Banalaxmi*. Even she does not hesitate to relate her relationship with the garden to Aditya,

Even since I discovered after our marriage that you loved your garden like your life, I identified myself with the garden; else I should have pitted myself against it I couldn't have endured it, it would have been to me like a co-wife. You know how I cherished it every hour of my life, how I made it a part of my being, till it became almost my very self. ( 145 )

In fact, Aditya called Sarala to help him in the garden and also to look after his loving wife Niraja. Despite his love for Niraja, Aditya could not understand her possessive nature. Niraja discovers a rival in Sarala. Her heart, once so broad and bounteous becomes narrow in jealous anger. She takes her maid servant Roshni, and the gardener Halamali into confidence and learn from them Sarala's *Modus operandi* in her garden. She always finds faults with her work. She tries to prevent Sarala from working in the garden. While talking about Sarala she goes to that extent that she calls her an ill starred girl who would bring ill luck to their garden and their life.

Niraja does not understand what has happened to her. Niraja remembers that in the day of her good health she used to invite Sarala for the planting festivities. In fact, Niraja is aware of her weakness but her love for Aditya is so possessive that she can't tolerate

Sarala's presence now in the days of her inefficacy. She is shown feeling guilt at her own behaviour. Tagore says, "At times she could see clearly this poverty of her spirit and was filled with Shame. Yet she could not help it".(121)

She is frank enough while talking to her maid Roshani to admit that she had become so petty and mean. She could not understand the crippling of her mind. It might not be called the result of her ill luck but her own self is responsible for that. At such moments of realization she would like to give up, but at the moments of selfish possessiveness she would not like to allow anything to slip between her fingers. The memory of her past days, when she was the supreme and sole queen of her heaven, torments her now. She becomes angry and jealous since her illness, as announced by the doctor, becomes terminal. She greedily clings to the world of her own in which she was everything for Aditya.

Ramen, the idealistic character of the novel, advises her to be generous and renounce everything as she was at the threshold of death. Niraja, on the contrary becomes more and more envious that makes her condition more pathetic.

Ramen's repeated moralizing brings temporary relief to Niraja and she makes up her mind to give everything to Sarala. She visits the shrine despite her ill

health and sends for Sarala to her chamber. She also gives her necklace of pearl to Sarala saying,

Once I had desired that this necklace should be round my neck when the flames consume me on the funeral pyre, but this is better. Wear this necklace for me, right up to the last day. I wore it myself on special days your Dada knows all about them and when he sees it on your neck he will be reminded of those days.( 162 )

It is surprising because she always tried to marry Sarala off with Ramen. It is understood very easily that it is her ploy to get her out of husband's life. In fact, she is torn between two contrary feelings of acceptance and rejection of reality. The act of giving her necklace seems to be her desire to live to stay alive in her husband's mind even after her death.

As Niraja's heart was not cleansed, her sense of sacrifice did not probably work. It became rather farcical. Tagore evaluates it poetically by stating that "there are things which when uttered lose all their light".

( 166 )

Sarala is not moved by Niraja's action, but she is ashamed of herself. Sarala joins the freedom movement

and goes to jail. Thus, she rises in esteem of the people. Niraja too praises her by calling her genuine but again she appears jealous and makes frantic efforts to make her husband swear that he loves her and will remember her for all times to come. Sometimes it seems that she is the only responsible person for her misery. Aditya never lost his sense of duty till the end of her life. It is her jealousy that drove Aditya towards Sarala. Aditya and Sarala knew each other from their childhood days. They liked each other but never realized love for each other. It is ironical that Niraja herself made them realize their love yet Sarala keeps control over her desire as she is not an irresponsible woman. Niraja could see that Sarala performed her duty in the garden very well but her possessiveness could not admit it. Sarala was sincere also in her duties to the sick Niraja. But Niraja was not ready to accept the fact.

Niraja, even after Sarala's departure, feels insecure. Even though Aditya is sitting beside her, expressing his love and care for her, she doubts whether his soul is with Sarala. Aditya says to her, "your sick body has made your mind sick. That's why you have tormented yourself for no reason." ( 173 )

Niraja says that she wants to give her blessing to Sarala before she dies but again loses that spirit. She loses her balance and bursts into anger when Sarala comes to meet her,

No room for you here,  
you witch of hell,  
no room for you.  
I'll stick on, stick on, stick on! ( 175 )

She could not get peace while dying but the last words she uttered for Sarala were so poisonous to make her own soul unrest.

Readers feel that Niraja's love is so intense that she becomes venomous. She, like Sarmila ( Two Sisters ), also thinks of her husband's work and his comforts during her illness, yet she becomes selfish. The beloved woman in Niraja wants to possess everything of her domestic life. She does not want anyone even to think about encroaching upon her rights as Aditya's beloved wife. She sinks to that level that she cannot win anyone's love and admiration.

When Tagore shows such a woman, who is so possessive, so selfish and so poisonous: the question arises, in the reader's mind what does he want to convey through this character. Is it the effect of his own old age that made him look at the darkest, the most tragical side of everything? Tagore could have shown the reunion between Niraja and Aditya as he did so in Two Sisters. In fact, he shows the reality, which is more bitter, here in the novel The Garden.

Tagore always expresses his faith in woman, he always tries to understand her heart from within. His never-failing faith in woman's love also tries to tolerate the dark side of it. The woman like Niraja has been punished by God as her baby is snatched away by ill luck and she becomes physically disabled to help her husband in his loving work. Tagore has been blamed to do injustice to Niraja yet we feel that it is his acceptance of a woman in love. Her ill fate may be more responsible for her ill will. Again, we feel that Two Sisters and The Garden are based on the same theme where Tagore wants to show the sublime love of Sarmila by comparing it with that of Niraja's.

( B ) Widow :

Tagore is concerned greatly with the status of women in the then Indian society. He was grieved to see them in inhuman conditions. In order to make the Indians feel the state of women who were widows, he portrays two widows as the significant characters in his two novels : Eyesore and Chaturanga. However, he does reveal the strength of these widows inspite of all odds working against her.

(1) Binodini ( Eyesore )

(2) Damini ( Chaturanga )



Binodini :- The woman of courage

There are four female characters in the novel ChokherBali ( Binodini / Eyesore ) Rajlaxmi, Annapurna, Binodini and Asha. Rajlaxmi is a possessive mother and Annupurna is a loving aunt of Mahendra. Annupurna wants Bihari to marry her niece Asha as she knows that Bihari is a simple and reliable person who shall prove himself a good husband for an orphan girl like Asha. Asha is a simple but attractive young woman who has been deprived of parent's love and education too. After her marriage with Mahendra she enjoys the love of the loving husband but also suffers due to her ineptitude and over simplicity.

Binodini is a charming and beautiful young widow, who is frustrated and revengeful and yet has the great potentialities for deep compassion and self sacrifice. Tagore shows the immeasurable power and strangeness of the mind of Binodini. The title of the novel, itself suggests that Binodini is the predominant character. Though she is projected as the representative of the suffering Indian woman she is not a passive, lifeless image of sorrow and suffering. She is a living woman throbbing with life. Kripalani opines, "Binodini is the most real convincing and full blooded."

( Kripalani : 187 )

Binodini, as her name suggests, seems to be very joyful and cheerful but there is an unseen pain in the heart of Binodini. It is the pain of negligence, which leads her to ruin the lives of others. In the beginning, Binodini is shown as the beautiful and talented girl who is the only child of her parents. She had been accomplished and tutored by an English governess. Her father died young, without leaving enough money for her dowry. Her hand is offered to Mahendra, the son of the wealthy Rajlaxmi, an old friend of the mother's. Mahendra, after initial acceptance, backs out due to his aversion for an arranged marriage. Then Rajlaxmi asks Bihari to marry Binodini, but he also refuses, as the proposal has come for his friend Mahendra. Though both the young men have not seen Binodini, they hurt the feelings of the young girl by rejecting the proposal. Rajlaxmi could help her friend only by getting Binodini married to a distant cousin of hers "whose only claim to distinction was his excessively enlarged liver." ( 26 )

Unfortunately, she soon becomes a widow and is condemned to live a miserable life of seclusion in a remote village. Three years later the wayward Mahendra snatches Asha from Bihari's hand in undue haste. Asha, who experiences the love of Mahendra, forgets all her miseries, but also her duties as a daughter-in-law. The result is an estrangement between the possessive mother and the wife-infatuated son. Rajlaxmi goes away to her

native village and Bihari also accompanies her. At the village, Binodini cares for them with great affection. With her dutiful and loving nature she wins her admiration and love. Binodini, with her beauty, grace, dignity and intelligence wins the admiration of Bihari too. One day she reads a letter addressed to Bihari in his absence. Binodini's imagination is set aflame by her conjectures about the physical love, as Mahendra has written the letter about his married life. Binodini, an unloved widow, is not able to remain free from the passions she had been deprived of. She, now wants to avenge her humiliation and frustration, but she does everything impulsively not deliberately. When Rajlaxmi goes back to Calcutta, she takes Binodini, along with her. The letter creates curiosity and jealousy in the mind of Binodini. After meeting Asha she becomes more jealous and she is also conscious that she is superior to Asha in beauty, intelligence and skills. She bursts out,

This happiness, this passionate ardour of the husband was my due and should have been mine... what was denied and deprived of now belong to the slip of a girl, this little play-doll! ( 47 )

Binodini has good understanding of the psychology and minds of the people around her. In the

beginning only she comes to know about Asha's innocence and simplicity; and she also feels that Asha won't be able to smell her foul game. She also makes a fair assessment of Bihari, that he is secretly in love with Asha and it is he only, who can ruin her game. Binodini prepares herself to tempt Mahendra as she properly judges his character and realizes that he can't be faithful to Asha or anyone. She assesses Rajlaxmi that she is responsible for her son's meanness.

Binodini wins the confidence of credulous Asha. Asha, in her youthful zeal, narrates all the blissful acts experienced by her in Mahendra's company and Binodini like a thirsty bird sips everything as if to satisfy her own thirst of love. She beautifies Asha's beauty and sends her to Mahendra. Binodini feels that she herself goes to meet Mahendra and gets his love by sending Asha there, as she is not an insipid woman who has no desire to get love. She is a living woman, who cannot kill her desires under the veil of a widow. In the beginning, she is curious to know about the love and life, which she has been deprived of but the sense of jealousy enters and makes her restless. Furthermore, Mahendra's pretended inattention intensifies her grievance against Mahendra.

.....Why this indifference ? As though  
she was a piece of furniture!

Wasn't she human, wasn't she a woman?  
If only he came to know her he would see  
the vast difference between her and his  
pet *chuni*. ( 46-47 )

Binodini knows how to get love from the people around her and she has made up her mind to tempt Mahendra. Now she enters in the happy life of Mahendra and Asha. Asha and Binodini have become close friends and call each other 'Eyesore' ! – the name which Binodini has suggested. Asha mentions several names of beautiful things, from the Ganges water to *bakul* flower, but Binodini rejects those lovely names.

Binodini, now attracts Mahendra strongly towards her and Asha is too I to understand all her tricks. Thus in the early phase of the novel Binodini seems to be a seductress and poisonous woman who wants to take revenge. It is she, who uses an innocent woman like Asha as a decoy and disturbs her married life. But Binodini, who is an embodiment of tender love and sympathy for all, does not know her strange feelings towards Mahendra. Not only the near ones but the servants also have experienced the love and care of this woman when they are sick. Her thoughts about Mahendra have been revealed thus.

She had not forgotten that he had spurned her hand in marriage and deprived her of her right to love and happiness... Did she hate him for it and sought to avenge her wrong, or did she love him and wanted to offer herself in self-surrender? All she knew was that she was being consumed of hate or of love or both, she could not say... Do I wish to die or to destroy? Am I the hunter or the hunted? I wish I knew. ( 74 )

The spell of her love makes Mahendra crazy, but she, while tempting Mahendra, retains her own self-control. When Rajlaxmi also accuses her of being seductress, Binodini writes a letter to Mahendra and reveals her desire to escape from the storm, which she herself has created. In fact, it is not Mahendra but Bihari who can fulfill her need of pure love. Tagore writes,

.... The shoulder that a woman can lean on must be strong, reliable and firm. Such a shoulder was Bihari's. ( 181 )

Binodini who had chosen Asha as his bride could not marry her as Mahendra married her. Bihari made up his mind to remain a bachelor as he prayed

Annupurna not to ask him for any other marriage proposal. Bihari's mind was not free from the memory of Asha. Bihari thus wished to express his fidelity to Asha, perhaps on psychological level. He wants to save Asha's married life, for him Binodini is like a poisonous tree. He warns Mahendra, saying,

Binodini is deliberately trying to seduce  
you and you, like a fool, are playing into  
her hands. ( 58 )

But Bihari sees the different, fair face of Binodini when they all go to *Dum-Dum* garden for picnic. Bihari learns about her past and sees a gracious woman hidden inside the tactful Binodini. He succumbs for the first time that "Binodini looks a gay butterfly but deep inside her burns the austere light of a pure and devoted woman". ( 66 )

Though Binodini loves Bihari from within, she continues to lure Mahendra. Furthermore, Bihari's sympathetic understanding and the change of attitude for Binodini make Mahendra jealous. When Mahendra openly accuses Bihari for his secret and pious love for Asha, Binodini's love for Bihari increases. She honestly understands the honest human heart of Bihari. But Bihari's image of hers is shattered when he sees Mahendra clasping Binodini's feet in his room, where she

was about to go out. Bihari flung her away, violently but that gesture of contempt is very sacred to Binodini. The wound she gets from him is very precious to her and she doesnot want to heal it. Now her love for Bihari is not just love but devotion. When she is with Mahendra, she is proud and seductress but with Bihari she is a devoted woman who craves for Bihari's pure love only. Such parallel yet opposite streams are flowing in the character of Binodini. When Mahendra professes love to Binodini, she says,

At one time you thought you were in love with Asha. It was false. Now you imagine you are in love with me. That too is false. You love only yourself. ( 147 )

Binodini now tells Bihari about Mahendra's respected declarations of love. Bihari is too firm in his ideals to accept her love. He also denies her request for a kiss to keep as a moments memory, to cherish till my death". ( 159 )

Binodini obeys Bihari's order and goes back to her village but she finds the condition unbearable. Now she agrees to elope with Mahendra to escape from the village. Mahendra has to give a promise that he would not do anything against her wishes. She has but one goal to find out Bihari and surrender herself before him. With



the help of Mahendra, she goes to Allahabad. On the other hand, Mahendra does not know that she is searching for Bihari and he is just a pawn for her.

Here, Bihari who has been living without any desire for love, now longs for Binodini. It is the victory of Binodini's strong love for him that his firmness is shaken. He does not know that Binodini has stayed at the place in Allahabad where he had stationed for some days. Towards the end of the novel, Bihari goes to Allahabad in search of Mahendra to take him to attend on his dying mother. Bihari finds Binodini in a room in the villa bedecked with flowers. Bihari imagines wrong about her but she dispels such doubts and says that his image saved her and she has remained chaste. Bihari now believes every word she says and offers to marry her. Her love for Bihari is more spiritual than physical. Her resolution, "Bihari must – he shall accept my offering." (181)

Binodini made both Mahendra and Bihari restless under her spell. Mahendra craves for the outer beauty, while Bihari's heart and soul are overpowered by her inner beauty. She represents the eternal woman whose beauty is not confined to her body but envelopes her soul too. Binodini's love for Bihari is so strong that she feels the presence of Bihari in the villa he had stayed, and pines for him. He really comes there as if to fulfill her desire of love. Binodini like *Radha* waits for Bihari

(*BinodBihari* is one of the names of Lord Krishna) at the bank of the river Yamuna, and her wish comes true. Binodini could wash Bihari's doubt clean with her tears. Bihari's proposes her, not to redeem a sinner but to get the true love of Binodini.

Tagore's observation in this context, is appropriate,

We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment, it is truth, it is the joy that is at the root of all creation.....

( Tagore : Sadhana, 88 )

Bihari's sudden proposal of marriage was beyond Binodini's imagination. She gets everything now but she does not accept the proposal. How mysterious she is! Binodini, who is the herald of the emerging class of new woman, chooses the way where other widows have gone; and decides to give up all her desires. She says, "I shall pray and do penance that I may have you as mine in our next life—in this life I dare not hope for more. I do not deserve it. I have caused much suffering, have borne much suffering and have learnt a great *uccum*..... if I am able to raise my head once more, it is because you

stood above me and helped me to rise. This pillar, this refuge, I will not destroy". ( 243 )

She wishes him to be as unsmeared and happy as he is. Again, she tells him that she will serve the wretched people as he does.

It is surprising how Binodini, who always yearns for love, leaves everything so easily? It is not the lack of courage on the part of Tagore that he could not show a widow marrying again because he had already shown a widow remarriage in his story Tyaga – (Renunciation) in 1892. Here in Binodini, Tagore shows a woman Binodini who has made Mahendra a puppet in her hands and has surrendered herself before the gracious feet of Bihari. There are two women living in Binodini – one is jealous, thirsty and arrogant while another is devoted, loving and holy. At the end, the unfeigned and loving woman triumphs over the envious woman. In spite of her strong love for Bihari, she makes him free. Though some readers and critics feel that her resolution affects the charm of the novel, Tagore shows Binodini's womanliness at the end.

Damini :- A Frank, fearless and rebellious woman

Damini who appears in the novel Chaturanga (1916) is a woman who wants to realize life without any coat of spiritualism or idealism. Tagore focuses his

attention more on Damini's attitude towards love than on her involvement in spirituality. Tagore makes an indepth study of man-woman relationship against the spiritual background.

In Chaturanga, Tagore has a love story to tell with the usual love triangle, but the main focus of the theme lies in the interface of love with spiritualism and the consequent crisis.

Jagmohan, Sachis, Sribilas and Damini are the main characters of the novel. Jagmohan, who represents the reformers of his 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal, attacks the orthodox Hindus represented by his brother Harimohan. He gives vent to the views of the newly educated youth. Sachis is under the influence of his uncle, Jagmohan and co-operated him in his efforts at the upliftment of his Muslim and chamar neighbours. Jagmohan is atheist but his humanism is his religion. Purandhar, Sachis's brother, inherits his father's quality in totally. Sachis follows his uncle's ideology quite closely, but contradicts his own father Harimohan's views. Jagmohan dies when plague breaks out in Calcutta for he served the victims with selfless devotion and didn't even care for his own health. Harimohan's worship is not for humanbeings but for idol-gods. Unlike Jagmohan, Harimohan hates the downtrodden. His eldest son Purandhar seduces Nanibala, a poor girl, and casts her aside. Sachis offers to marry her so as to save her but she commites suicide. Sachis

renounces the world and turns towards religion. He comes into the fold of Swami Leelananda, a *vaishnav* saint. Here comes Damini in Sachis's life.

Damini is a widow who seems to be eager for enjoying life. In the eyes of Sribilas, the narrator of the novel and Sachis's friend,

Damini was like the lightning in the heart of the *Sravana* rain clouds, having with youthfulness to outward view, but flickering with restless fires within. ( 45 )

Her laughter itself suggests that she loves life. Unfortunately, her husband was different from her. Damini wanted to feel the life in its full while Sivatosh was turned towards spiritualism. Damini, obviously, was not happy with him as both of them suffered from ideological differences. Their mutual distrust led to mutual disgust. Sivatosh was a faithful follower of Swami Leelananda and wanted Damini to follow him, but Damini did not accept his idea. She was made to serve the swami but her mind did not serve him. Her rebellious nature is revealed when she shows her contrived excuses for not serving the swami. Sivatosh died young but left behind his property and his widow Damini under the guardianship of the Swami.

We pity Damini as she is left alone with these spiritual finders. Suddenly a change comes in Damini's life as Sachis joins the group of the Swami with his friend Sribilas. Sachis desires to forget the vagaries of plague, the death of his uncle, the brutality of purandhar and the death of that innocent young woman Nanibala. He turned to spiritual practices to repair all the loss. Sribilas notes that in the company of Leelananda he was not in his usual form. Rather, he was under "a strange intoxication." ( 39 )

Sribilas accepts that even during their religious activities Damini attracted his attention.

But suddenly sometimes a woman's rising laughter from within the house would penetrate those impenetrably deep discourses. Now and again we heard someone call in a high voice, *Bami* ! These ofcourse were as nothing beside the contemplative heaven to which we had transported ourselves and yet suddenly reminded one of a sharp, cool shower of rain in times of drought. ( 44 )

Sachis tries to escape from the realities of life and Damini is one of them, who hold his mind. Sachis notes in his diary,

In Nanibala I saw one archetype of womanhood, the woman who took upon herself the stain of impurity, who gave her life for a sinner.... In Damini I have seen another archetype of womanhood who refuses to have any truck with death. She is soaked in the sap of life, she is vibrant and forever filling her self with grace and fragrance like flowers in the spring. ( 45 )

Sachis is disturbed by Damini's youthful vivacity. Damini falls in love with Sachis who is after formless and rejects her love. Damini tries all the ways to distract and seduce him. She plays pranks with him. She made a mess of things in his absence but Sachis's room in his absence but Sachis did not succumb to her tricks. Despite his mental disturbances, he did not surrender to her appeal of love. One day, Damini made a frank but pathetic appeal by entering his room and knocking her head on the ground, muttering, "stone, O you stone, have pity on me, have pity, kill me." ( 49 )

The above words reveal her deep desire for Sachis's love and also the pain of her love, which is not accepted. Though Sachis tries to ignore her love, she cannot suppress her feelings for Sachis.

In order to liberate himself from Damini, Sachis accompanied Leelananda Swami on his

pilgrimage. Damini's sincerity in love made her to sense Sachis's tricks and she convinced the swami to allow her to accompany them. The Swami was happy to see Damini joining them for their spiritual journey but for Damini it was a quest for love. Her presence disturbed the young devotees here on the pilgrimage too. A memoir written by Sachis is included in the story to flash back the event. He wrote,

The darkness of the cave was like some black brute breathing its moist breath on me. The first primordial beast with neither eyes nor ears but only a vast hunger, eternally confined in the cave. It had no mind, no awareness of anything at all. Only it was in constant pain and wept in silence. ( 51 )

Sachis felt like leaving the cave but all his efforts were in vain. He felt as if the primordial beast had put him into its dripping, salivating mouth, barring all escape. He was so frightened but tried to sleep. While Sachis was in such mental state, Damini entered the cave and caught hold of Sachis's feel and sighed in love. Sachis mistook her as a primordial beast with a slight difference. In the darkness, Sachis, who was so frightened and disgusted, went on kicking and kicking.



Damini, who came to offer her love fled with a strangled cry from the cave. Tagore shows this situation, especially through the metaphor of the cave to reveal the mystery of lustful love.

After this incident, Damini began to behave in a very strange manner. Again she ignored the Guru Leelananda. She did not even go before the devotees. She does not even listen to Sachis who tells her to follow the Swami faithfully. She could not persuade herself not to love Sachis. Tagore says, ".... A woman is ready to give her heart away only where she receives sorrow." ( 58 ) She defied the guru in her words and deeds. She was like a 'kite in the cage'. ( 59 )

Damini, now employs a new strategy to attract stone-hearted Sachis. She took Sribilas into her confidence, which was rather easier. Sribilas knew her trick yet he could not ignore this lively woman. He also knew that Damini stopped going to the Guru "out of resentment" and avoided Sachis as she was full with "opposite feelings toward him." ( 59 )

Sachis knew everything and Damini's craving for his love, yet he could not accept her love. He himself succumbed that he could not escape from the love but spiritual liberation was necessary to be achieved therefore he, very cruelly avoids her. Infact, Sachis is deceiving himself. Sachis tries to escape from reality by ignoring Damini's love for him. Damini employs many

tricks to win the heart of Sachis. Damini was trying to make Sachis jealous so as to attract him to her. But constraint between them continued which in itself is a symbol of their love. Sribilas who understands everything says it very clearly,

Sachis probably did not realise that I envied him precisely for that constraint between him and Damini, the lack of which between her and me he envied in his turn. ( 69 )

When Sachis was not there with the Swami for some days. Damini did not talk much to Sribilas. She behaved stangely. She shut herself in her room without going anywhere.

Damini's love is so strong that Sachis, despite his inclination for religion, cannot ignore it. Sachis asks Damini to leave their company, as his heart is unable to leave her. Damini does not listen to his requests, therefore he himself leaves the *ashram*. But he was hardly free from the thoughts about Damini. He surrenders and also realizes that in her company only he can perform his duties better. He tells her to participate in the religious activities. Sachis becomes her *Guru* and Damini follows him whole-heartedly. The rebel Damini

becomes a devotee. Tagore observes the process minutely,

The Stone melted again. The intolerable fire within Damini now shed its heat and retained only the glow. Grace and sweetness blossomed forth in prayer, worship and service. ( 70 )

Damini's love for Sachis could understand his spiritual quest. As soon as she realizes that her love is an obstacle on the way of his spiritual journey. She renounces her love for him. She marries Sribilas yet her devotion for Sachis grows more and more. Damini's self abnegation enables Sachis to walk on his path of religion.

Damini's love is now free from physical desires and becomes spiritual. It gets elevated through intense realization. Damini married Sribilas to make Sachis free from her emotional entanglement and Sribilas himself noted, "It is I who had talked Damini into marrying me. We had met in the full light of day in the full knowledge of everything." ( 79 )

Even after marriage, Damini looked after Sachis and took care of him all the time as though he was a child. In course of it she was, ofcourse, hurt but she did not care and went on serving him. Once in a rainy night Damini went to Sachis's room to close the windows but Sachis took it otherwise. He fled from the

room, and went out in darkness. Damini followed him to the riverbank with a promise that she would not transgress any longer. She kept her words. Sribilas also said that Damini might not have understood Sachis's words but she always understood Sachis.

Within a few days of their marriage Damini fell ill without any hope of recovery. She succumbed to the fatal kick, she had got in the cave that darknight. She called that pain as her "hidden treasure". ( 98 )

She wore that as an ornament and told Sribilas who expressed some harsh words for Sachis for the pain he had given to Damini,

What do you know of what he has saved me from? You merely think of my suffering but do you ever realise how he has suffered that I should be spared? The ogre strove to kill beauty and got kicked in the chest. Just as well, all to the good, all to good! ( 91 )

She was a true lover who considered pain given by Sachis as pleasure and died happily. Even she went to the extent of begging her husband Sribilas to take her to the place where she was kicked at her chest by Sachis.

Damini is one of the most lovable of Tagore's women. She is a timeless heroine who became a martyr on the pyre. She could go beyond her lust and transform her love as spiritual. Damini is like most of Tagore's heroines who is outspoken in her feelings and expressions. She denounces the canons of society and religion and is bold enough to go against them. "She neither dressed like a widow nor did she seem to care for the Guru's instruction..." ( 47 )

Damini does not hesitate to express her love for Sachis but Sachis tries to go away from reality therefore he ignores her. Damini's rebellious nature is changed when Sachis accepted to become her spiritual guide. Tagore does not care for the mentality of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century society while showing Damini getting married again rather he wanted to show that to the conservative Indian society. Again, to show the height of Damini's spiritual love for Sachis, he shows Damini in love with Sachis now her guru, even after her remarriage. Her love reaches to sublime where no petty desires, no society can reach to snatch it away from her.

Damini shows the changing face of a new woman of late nineteenth century. She is realistic, frank and fearless, free and liberated woman, who attracts everyone with her grace. She is "so real that no reader having known her can ever forget her". ( Kripalani : 251 )

( C ) Unmarried Woman :

Tagore reveals the young and unmarried facet of woman in moving terms. There are quite a few impressive characters under this category.

- (1) Hemnalini ( The Wreck )
- (2) Labanya ( Farewell My Friend )
- (3) Urmimala ( Two Sisters )
- (4) Sarala ( The Garden )
- (5) Sucharita ( Gora )
- (6) Lolita ( Gora )

Hemnalini :- A herald of the class of New Woman

Hemnalini appears in the novel, The Wreck. Tagore could have developed this character more but he showed only the glimpses of such a fine character.

Hemnalini is the first heroine in Tagore's novels who makes pre-marital love with Ramesh in the knowledge of the members of the family. She is a college educated young woman who loves literature and philosophy. Tagore shows the background of 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal when the orthodox Hindus were not ready to welcome new ideas. On the contrary, the Brahmos who accepted the changes, allowed their female members to

study. The Brahmo girls were the well-educated girls and had their voice in the society. Tagore shows Hem as a Brahmo girl who can express her ideas clearly. Though she harbours a kind of western style of love she is not anglicised enough. She loves Ramesh openly yet she does not cross the limits of Indian value system.

Hemnalini is a loving daughter of Ananda Babu, a follower of the Brahmo Samaj. Hemnalini came in contact with her brother Jogendra's friend Ramesh. Ramesh is an intelligent student who did his graduation in law. He helped her to prepare for her B.A. Examination. In course of time they were attracted toward each other and they fell in love. Though nothing was said, no promise was given, both of them made it clear to others that they would marry each other. Ananda Babu, a broad-minded father approved the proposal though he had someone else in his mind for Hemnalini. Here, father gives this right to his daughter to live her life in her own way and that too, without any prejudice for Ramesh who belonged to orthodox Hindu family.

Hemnalini had faith in Ramesh deeply as a true lover. Circumstances drove them adrift and Ramesh got entangled with Kamala after the wreck, but Hem did not misunderstand Ramesh. It is her faith in his love, which is unshakable, makes her a true lover. Though Akshay disclosed the fact about Ramesh's entanglement with Kamala, she was not ready to believe it. Tagore

shows that Hem could hear the inner voice of Ramesh's heart, which was always true to Hemnalini at heart. Hem says to her brother, "I'll never believe it till I hear it from his own lips!" ( 102 )

Ramesh, who could not rush back to Hemnalini and leave Kamala, always loved Hemnalini only. In connection with his involvement with Kamala, Ramesh himself confesses, "Fate involved me in such an inextricable web of falsehood that I could see no remedy except to draw every thing into its meshes". ( 184 ) In other words, he was true to Hemnalini's love. Hemnalini even after the fact about Ramesh come in public, waited hopefully for him. As Tagore states, "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

( Tagore : Greetings of Sunrise, 6 )

Love and faith have their own message for the lovers who can feel the presence of each other even when they are too far away from each other. Hemnalini could forgive Ramesh but it was difficult rather impossible for her to erase his memory from her mind.

Hemnalini and her father were very fond of each other. Hemnalini was brought up by her father alone, as she had lost her mother in her infancy. So a friendly relationship grew between them and they were deeply concerned about each other's well being. Hemnalini was worried about her father's failing health. When her marriage with Ramesh was cancelled.



Annadababu, as a father, thought about someone else for Hemnalini. But Hemnalini turned to asceticism having been frustrated in love. It is not Ramesh whom she made responsible for her plight. She blamed the circumstances that forced him to do so. She was, indeed, a true lover who had comprehended love thoroughly and truly. KH. Kunjo Singh says,

She exhibits a rare constancy of love and loyalty towards Ramesh but the later's indecisiveness, lack of grit and inability to release himself from the grip of circumstances that overtake him render their love unfruitful. ( Singh, 59-60 )

Nalinaksh, a doctor and a stoic philosopher who happened to be there at Calcutta, became a frequent visitor to Annadababu's home. He could show Hemnalini a path in her moments of spiritual crisis. He influenced her to that extent that she accepted him as the spiritual Guru. She became his devotee, so to say. So, when Annadababu gave her the proposal for her marriage with Nalinaksha, she spoke out, "Why, really, dad! It's quite impossible." ( 298 )

Her prompt and spontaneous answer dashed the hopes of the father. Tagore shows Hemnalini's

vacillation, when her father suggests for her marriage with Nalinaksha again.

When she finally determined to regard Nalinaksha as her spiritual preceptor and to order her life according to his teaching, she supposed that her object was attained. But when this marriage was proposed and she essayed to root out the old love from its lurking place in the innermost recess of her heart she realized how ineradicable it really was. A threat to sever the old attachment was enough to make Hemnalini cling to it in her despair more resolutely than ever. ( 300 )

Hemnalini had no wish to marry and she could not think of marriage with her preceptor. Inside of that she told her father to arrange her marriage, as she knew her father's deep desire. Hemnalini requested him to give some time to prepare herself to marry someone else than Ramesh.

Hemnalini considered that she would perform a sacred duty by marrying Nalinaksha. Nalinaksha was a pathfinder but Ramesh had his own place in her heart. Tagore reveals her mind and her dilemma, "Nalinaksha's life was no negligible asset. To serve a man like him was a work of piety." ( 336 )

Tagore's purpose of removing distance between the educated, modern Brahmos and the Hindus is also hidden here. Hemnalini is a woman of progressive Brahmosamaj while Nalinaksha belongs to the Hindus.

Hemnalini becomes more a spiritual follower than a woman who loves Nalinaksha. Her faith in love and ofcourse God helped her that Kamala intervened before the marriage took place. She comes to know the fact that Kamala is Nalinaksha's wife and fortunately she was present in his house without disclosing her identity. Even the misunderstanding that crept into her mind about Kamala's relation with Ramesh was cleared. Her love for Ramesh gave her strength to help and motivate Kamala to reveal her identity before Nalinaksha. Though her faith in Nalinaksha is not shaken, yet she inspires Kamala to assert her place and position as Nalinaksha's wife.

Hemnalini's reconciliation with Ramesh is not suggested by Tagore, so readers feel that Hemnalini's love for Ramesh remains unfaithful. In spite of her steadfast love for Ramesh, her union with Ramesh is not suggested directly. Although the readers feel that it is understood that Kamala's union with Nalinaksha paved the way for Hemnalini's union with Ramesh.

Tagore does not elucidate the reconciliation and therefore he succeeds in presenting the greatness of "selfless love" that can be realized without union. Tagore

is able to sound the depths of Hemnalini though her character is not fully developed. Sisirkumar Ghose says, "She is the first of a type that recurs in Rabindranath, the prototype of Sucharita, Kumudini and Lavanya, Tagore's dream daughters." ( Ghose : 72 )

Thus Hemnalini is a fine character who can be called a herald of the class of a woman who is educated, intellectual, sensitive and sensible.

Labanya :- A sensitive and sensible woman

Farewell, My Friend, deals with the theme of love. It is not surprising that Tagore wrote such passionate work when he was seventy, as the artist in him never grew old with the time. Bhabani Bhattacharya aptly says that, "Here the theme from beginning to the end is love." ( Bhattacharya : 96-101 )

Labanya is the heroine of Sesher Kabita (Farewell, My Friend). Labanya is the unique heroine of Tagore's fictional world. She is quite different from Binodini, Bimala and Damini. She is an educated, studious, beautiful, middle class young woman. Labanya has got her post-graduate degree and has earned her livelihood on her own. Before she met the hero, Amit Ray, her intelligence always won over her emotions.

Amit Ray is the protagonist of the novel. Though he likes to enjoy the company of young women,

he does not opt for marriage. However, he is the most wanted bachelor of the social circle in Calcutta as he is rich and refined with a qualification of bar-at-law. Tagore creates the characters like Bimi Bose, Lily Ganguly, Katie Mitter and Amit's sisters Cissie and Lissie to show how Labanya is different from the fashion affected young girls. While describing Lissie and Cissie, Tagore says,

From head to heel they are absolutely the latest brand smartly wrapped ware in the showcase of fashion. ( 4 )

Amit flirts with the young girls who swarm around but does not find all the qualities of a damsel of his imagination. He is a dreamer and the ideal girl of his imagination, his would be wife shall have all such qualities. He says about his dream girl,

She flashes into my heart like a meteor from the sky and is lost in the air before she can enter a brick and mortar abode.

( 6 )

Thus Amit's search for such woman who is an ideal, a dream shows that he is a dreamer whose feet are not on earth. His dream girl is one half woman, the other half imagination. His sister, therefore aptly says to him, "Ami your life will be spent among shadows." ( 11 )

Amit is "obsessed with style" ( 9 ) and he always does everything to make himself distinguished. Neither Tagore's poetry nor the young and modern girls of Bengal suit to his whims. When he goes to Shillong, he aspires for a sweet accident that would enable him to come across the girl of his imagination.

Who knows? By some miracle of fate he might come upon the destined one waiting for him by the way, like one of the sonorous named heroines of kalidasa an *Avantika* or a *Malavika* or one of nymphs of the *Himalayan* deodars, Keeping vigil for the footsteps of her lover ! ( 14 )

At that time only Amit's care almost runs into that of Labanya's in a curved mountain road. It is the same accident, which Amit has been waiting for because he comes across his aspired love now Amit sees Labanya for the first time. Against the background of mystic nature, Labanya appears in her full glory. Tagore notes,

Amit saw a rare vision, as though a *Lakshmi* had risen from the ocean which the gods had churned and stood poised above the foaming and raging waters.(14)

In the beginning of the novel, one may feel that Amit's narcissism will prevent him to love any one, but Amit meets his beloved in Shillong.

This encounter blends the hearts of Labanya and that of Amit's with love. Both of them know their own 'self', as love flows from one to the other and vice versa. Their exposure to each other works as a catalyst in knowing their own 'self'. Their love erase the memory of the past and they go on exploring the mystery of love day in and day out. Labanya is tutoress to Yogamaya's daughter surama. She is M.A. and a lover of books and literature. She is aware of the problems of love and life, especially after the experience of Sobhanlal's silent love for her.

While she was studying, her father Abanish Dutta could see her love for knowledge. Abanish dutta was a principal in a college in western India. He brought up his one and only motherless daughter Labanya tenderly. He believed that a knowledgeable person neednot get married. He thought that even his daughter would not marry anyone. Tagore writes in this connection,

He had even considered the possibility of her never marrying. "What if she didnot marry! Let her be wedded to knowledge"!

( 20 )

In the prime of Labanya's youth, Sobhanlal, a studious, shy and handsome young man secretly loved her. Sobhanlal came from a poor family but his devotion to learning, his hardwork, his brilliance gave him success in getting free scholarships. Abanish was proud of sobhanlal's academic success, as he was his 'blue eyed boy'. No one knew about Sobhanlal's love for Labanya, but the discovery of this love affair prompted Sobhanlal's father to take Labanya's father to task for enticing his son. Labanya drove Sobhanlal away from her house as his behaviour had tainted the good name of her loving father. Sobhanlal, who always used to top the list of the scholars, unknowingly gave pain to Labanya. Labanya could never outwit Sobhanlal in any examination but after leaving her house he showered his dedicated love in a different way from a distance. Labanya, instead of Sobhanlal, stood first in the M.A. examination. Her father, who knew her intelligence, her brilliance, had no doubt about Sobhanlal's brilliance too. Tagore says referring to Abanish's expression,

Had Sobhanlal been a poet he would have filled a volume with verses; instead he presented her with a fat lot of examination marks by the simple process of renouncing his claim to them. ( 22 )



Labanya's father, at the age of forty seven, realized his fault that his daughter was deprived of true love and the reason was his excess love for learning. Labanya too, was hypnotised by books. Abanish thought, "..... not to fall in love with a boy like Sobhanlal would have been too unnatural of her." ( 23 )

Readers also feel that Labanya tried to evade life's reality. Sobhanlal truly loved her and could not forget her but he could not express his true love. Thus, her attitude towards love got a rude shock from the outset. The second shock she got when she discovered her aged father's infatuation for a widow. Once sobhanlal wrote to her father about his thesis and requested him to lend some books. Abanish invited him to use his library again. Sobhanlal came, but after some days Labanya went to meet him. Sobhanlal's heart was still throbbing for Labanaya but Labanya's hatred made him to leave the house again. Tagore writes here,

When an impediment crosses the way of love and we are prevented from loving someone whom we might have loved, then such a person becomes for us an object, not of indifference, but of the very opposite of love, blind hatred. Perhaps, unknown even to herself, Labanya had

once waited to shower her gift of love on  
Sobhanlal. ( 24 )

Labanya misjudged her father too, as she thought that her father, perhaps wanted to get rid of her, therefore he invited Sobhanlal again to attract her. Thus Labanya's past shows her a woman whose intellect discarded sobhanlal's love, for love has no room in her heart. M. Sarada aptly observes...

....Tagore points out in the novel that with the development of education and modernization of society, the problem of women have multiplied and "nothing remains simple any longer". The modern, educated women are conscious of the change. Hence, while selecting their life partners, great discretion is exercised by them regarding mental compatibility.

( Sarada : 105 )

Labanya, a modern heroine of Tagore, is the first among other heroines of Tagore to earn her livelihood. Her father's marriage affirms her belief that love is a weakness. After the accident occurred, Amit came in her life. Love came slowly but surely to Labanya.

Labanya, whose intellect-guarded heart dejected Sobhanlal, is now under the spell of Amit's love.

The spell of Labanya's love changed Amit Ray too. Amit, who was ever busy to prove his superiority, was extravagant and irresponsible too. Amit flirted with so many modern, beautiful young women but Labanya's beauty-intellectual beauty attracts him. Amit, who considered himself an original, vibrant young intellectual and criticised the poetry of Tagore, now comes out of the world of egoists. Labanya, who seemed to be a woman who was indifferent to love, is changed now. Both of them are seen in another guise, as if their true facets are revealed now. Amit calls her *Banya* ( a flood ) and Labanya calls him *Mita* ( an intimate friend ). Once Amit says to Labanya,

*Banya*, you have transformed the rhythm  
of my life and in that rhythm your music  
and mine are now blended into one. ( 47 )

Amit proposes marriage but his plans for the post-marital life sound absurd. Labanya, in spite of her love for Amit, concludes that Amit may not be able to be a responsible husband. Amit's words, poetic excellence alone will not be enough to lead a successful married life. Amit is a dreamer, while Labanya is a practical young

woman. Amit says, "Labanya wants to analyse everthing in the light of the intellect." ( 49 )

Labanya could understand Amit's nature very truly. She is self confident, but accepts that Amit's love has helped her to know her own 'self'. Amit took her to the world of love, yet she hesitates to accept him as her husband! while discussing her thoughts with Yogamaya, Labanya says about Amit.

With words he seeks to remould me. If his mind wearies, if the words fail him, this very commonplace girl who was not his own creation will be exposed in that void, Marriage means acceptance, which leaves little room for moulding on the potter's wheel. ( 52 )

She says that she wants to remain 'a dream' only. When Yogamaya asked her whether Amit is an 'illusion' for her, she does not answer but she broke down. Her own decision, "I don't want to marry and cause unhappiness" makes her weep. ( 52 )

Amit's penance began as he was fascinated not only by Labanya's beauty but also by her keen intellect. Amit's restless spirit finds serenity in Labanya.

In Labanya's face he saw a picture of serenity, born not of emotional self complacency but of the profound poise of a calm and balanced mind. ( 29)

Amit was serious yet his attempt to attract the attention of Labanya and win her favour was farcical. Amit got the help from Yogmaya who knows that both Amit and Labanya truly love each other. Amit tries to dispel Labanya's fear and says that his outlook is bound to change after marriage, Labanya gives her consent for the marriage and Amit sends for an engagement ring from Calcutta.

The unexpected reversal comes in the story with the arrival of Katie Mitter ( Ketaki Mitra ) with Amit's sisters at Shillong. In Amit's absence, they reach there at Yogmaya's house and try to show their so-called modern ways to Labanya. For them, Labanya is a "governess" only and they insult her but Amit turns up with the ring at that time. Now he slips the ring on Labanya's finger but Katie reminds Amit about the ring he had given her seven years ago at Oxford. She also says that the ring, which had not been taken off for a moment, she wants to throw now and she really does so. Labanya expresses her feelings for Katie, though she is shocked by her behaviour. Amit explains that Katie was an altogether different person than at Oxford. He says,

Katie's face was not plastered with paint those days, her laughter was spontaneous, she could still blush. ( 101 )

Labanya had a generous heart, her education was not superficial. She believes that Amit is responsible for the transformation of Ketaki into Katie. She tells Amit,

She once gave herself completely into your hands, *Mita*. Why didn't you make her your own? You loosened your hold and let her go, no matter why, and since then a dozen hands have fallen on her and made her what she is. It was because she lost you that she began to deck herself out for other tastes. That's why she looks like a foreign doll. If her heart had remained alive it couldn't have happened. ( 103 )

Labanya does not throw his ring like Katie does, but she returns it, saying that their love need no outward token. Labanya's decision shows her generosity as well as her rational approach too. Coincidentally Sobhanlal's letter is received by Labanya, in which Sobhanlal had clarified all misgivings about his

relationship with Labanya. Labanya now realizes his tender love for her. It is Amit only who could make Labanya feel the love of Sobhanlal. She can feel Sobhanlal's love for her because, now she knows what is love and its importance in her life. She has no complain against Amit and her love for Amit is still not shaken. She loves Amit and does not expect anything from him and that is her true love blended with her humanism. Amit accepts to marry Ketaki, and Labanya accepts Sobhanlal. Such change of mind is, in no way detrimental to the progress of love. Amit realises, at last, that there are two types of love: love in separation and love in union. He feels their difference in dimension when he says,

What binds me to Ketaki is love, but this  
love is like water in a vessel, which I shall  
daily draw and daily use. The love which  
draws me to Labanya is a lake, which  
cannot be brought indoors but in which  
my mind will swim. ( 109 )

Labanya and Amit's love in separation make them realise the love for each other and also for others. Labanya realises her love for Sobhanlal on the one hand and for Amit on the other. Labanya in her last poem sends an invitation of her marriage and also a letter to Amit. She bids farewell to her *Mita* in the form of a poem,

What I gave to you  
Is yours by right everlasting.  
What others receive  
Are the daily dribblets the heart yields  
To tender solicitude.  
O my princely, peerless friend,  
What I gave to you was your own gift.  
Fuller your acceptance, the deeper my debt,  
My friend, farewell. ( 112 )

Thus, Amit and Labanya both, believe that their love itself is limitless and it remains forever even if they cannot marry each other. It is Labanya's love only, which could understand Ketaki's heart. Taogre shows Labanya an emotional as well as an intellectual woman. Her decision, no doubt, is the result of her understanding, generous and selfless heart. Her decision also makes the readers think about her dilemma before she accepted Amit's proposal for marriage. As she thought that Amit was a man of words and she was like a dream for him, she was hesitant to give her consent for marriage. Even though Amit was ready to change himself, Labanya did not want the change in Amit. Her love for Amit is always away from all such expectations. She says,



What if it is only a colourful butterfly  
come out of its cocoon for a brief sojourn  
– what harm is there in it? Is a butterfly  
less real than other things in this world?  
What if it rise with the sun and dies with  
the sunset? ( 52 )

Thus, Labanya believes that the precious time she had spent with Amit, though the brief interval it may be, has enriched her life. The readers feel that Labanya's love for Amit from the very beginning, was spiritual. She accepted and loved Amit as he was, therefore her sacrifice for Ketaki makes her love stronger. Although she could not marry Amit she gets Amit more than Ketaki.

Here, Tagore shows Ketaki, the other woman in love with Amit, a Bengali woman from upper middle class. Tagore shows the contrast between Labanya and Ketaki from all the points of view, and by doing this he shows Labanya's inner qualities, virtues and uniqueness. Tagore ironically describes Katie,

Katie Mitter's real name was Ketaki. In the distillery of her brother's style her manners had been thrice refined – a concentrated, superfine essence of foreign make. In her spite against the average Bengali girl's pride in her long hair, she had with equal pride applied the scissors

to her own, so that her hair, like the tail of a tadpole, had been transmuted into the bob of the complexion was well coated with enamel.... ( 89 )

Katie is an Anglicised Bengali woman, obstinate and rude, yet she does not lack the tender heart. In fact, Tagore shows his faith in woman's heart, which never lacks in such tender feeling of love. Katie, neglected by the man whom she loves too much, has developed a sort of rude manners and lost natural poise and laughter. She smokes before Yogamaya who is elderly and respectable, because she doubts that she has made the match of Labanya with Amit.

Even Lissie and Cissie, i.e. Amit's sisters, are Westernised in their attitudes, but the innate goodness of Indian womanhood has been preserved in them. For example, Lissie would not relish a strange man's embrace, nor would she like to smoke before Yogamaya.

Labanya is away from such so called modernity of Katie, yet she is thoroughly modern. Sometimes, the readers feel that Labanya is more rational than emotional, but her final decision is above all such realities of world where she is just a woman – a woman in love.

Urmimala :- A Playful Beloved

Urmimala appears in the novel Two Sisters (Dui Bon 1933 ) where she is Sarmila's younger sister. She is a beautiful young woman who is vital and lively like spring. Tagore shows the mother-kind woman Sarmila and the beloved-kind woman Urmimala in this novel.

Urmimala is enthusiastic about everything as if she wants to enjoy the life in its wholeness. Tagore writes,

She was eager about everything: interested in science, even more so in literature; greatly excited at the prospect of witnessing a football match on the maiden; not indifferent to the Cinema; ... ran out to the verandah to watch a wedding party pass by ....A frequent visitor to the Zoo..... ( 37 )

Tagore states that she is good-looking but seems better looking than she is. She knows how to dress-up elegantly to show her self more graceful. She cannot sing well so she plays Sitar. Tagore writes, "When she palyed, it was difficult to say whether it was a thing to hear or a sight to see..." ( 38 )

Urmi can change the dull atmosphere into gayness with her mere presence. Even her brother

Hemanta who died of some mysterious disease was youthful and lively like Urmi.

Urmimala was highly impressed by Dr. Nirad Mukherjee who was an old classmate of her brother. Urmi saw him nursing his friend Hemanta and giving proper diagnosis about his disease. However, Hemanta died as his father Rajaram had much faith in English doctors than that of an Indian. Both father and daughter realised that Nirad was a genius. "... Urmi too suddenly realized that here was a man of uncommon genius..."

( 29 )

Urmi is so enthusiastic that she is ready to study medicine and become a doctor so that she will be able to take charge of the hospital, which his father wants to found in the memory of his son. Rajaram now liked Nirad for Urmi but he would not impose his choice upon his daughter. He asked Urmi and Urmi under the spell of Nirad's talent, gave her consent too. Nirad is shown as an intellectual yet orthodox man who wishes that his wife should worship him. He is very much conscious of his talent and wishes that Urmi Would follow his guidance in the matter of education and everything. Urmi was so infatuated that "In whatever he said Urmi discovered a wonderful depth of meaning. Amazingly intellectual!" ( 35 )

Sasanka, from the very beginning did not like Nirad for Urmi. Sasanka thought that Nirad was so

boring and studious while Urmimala was very fascinating and Zealous. Sasanka thought, "Pity that such a girl should fall into the hands of so great a prig." ( 36 )

Nirad has respect for Sarmila but not for Sasanka. He does not like the light-hearted nature of Sasanka. Nirad keeps on directing Urmi to mould her in a way what he likes. He does not like Urmi thinking about anything except study therefore he prevents her to go to Bhowanipore – her Sister's place.

Urmi, as her name suggests, is fervent, while Nirad is so impassive that Urmi's relation with Nirad gradually becomes painful. She is totally different from Nirad. Nirad may be very intelligent, terrific and smart but he can never outwit Urmi at English. Nirad, therefore, always tries to dazzle her with his mastery of that language. Urmi sometimes feels like laughing at his English but very wisely thinks that it would be her snobbery. In fact, Urmi's glory disappears before Nirad who always tries to bind Urmi with different rules and regulations. He would mark his books for Urmimala's study which contrarily enough, would act like, "... rope tied to her, towing her upstream". Urmi realizes very soon that Nirad is not a man of her desire. He is not able to talk or express anything sentimental as he, the scientist, doesn't know the language of heart but he takes it as a matter of pride.

"Sentimentality is not in my grain," he declared. On such occasions Urmi felt like crying, but so hypnotized was she by her own devotion that she too thought that this indeed was manliness. ( 43 )

We feel that it is not just Urmi's love or respect for Nirad that Urmi continues her relations with him. In fact, Urmi tries to be a responsible daughter who doesn't want to break the promise her father gave to Nirad. Again, she is a loving sister who wants to fulfill her late brother's dream though it is difficult for her to concentrate upon one single thing. She also feels that there is something in Nirad's personality, which she cannot understand. Nirad knows everything about her expectations yet he is so rigid and dry that he just keeps on guiding her without any glimpse of love. Nirad says to Urmi, "You are like a butterfly, restlessly flitting about without gathering anything...." ( 39 )

In fact, Nirad's attempts to make Urmi concentrate upon her aim, drive her away from it. Excess of Nirad's instructions makes Urmi stray from her path. Nirad, when leaves for London, leaves the detailed instructions for Urmi's 'future conduct and studies'.(47) Before anyone else could realize, Nirad was the first to predict that Urmi's visits to Sarmila's house would prove to be disastrous.

After Nirad's departure, she tries to follow the rigorous path against her mental make-up. The moment she gets pretext, she leaves her books behind and enters Sasank's life, as it were, like a spring-wind. With Urmi by his side, Sasank's life becomes a 'prolonged picnic' so to say. Their minds perfectly match and they go on playing, enjoying, grossly neglecting their assigned roles and duties.

Under the spell of infatuation Sasanka and Urmimala caused graver pain to suffering Sarmila. Sarmila is so caring and selfless wife that even in her serious illness, she thinks of Sasanka's comforts and business. Urmi has been called by Sarmila to run her home for her husband's convenience, but she caused a rude shock to Sarmila.

Sasanka's workaholic nature was Sarmila's rival but Sarmila considered it as the pride of man. But Urmi is different, she triumphs over her rival and makes Sasanka listening to radio, going to market and what not. That's why Sarmila is anxious and hurt too.

Looking into Sasanka's face she could see that he was always in a kind of trance. That this mere slip of a girl should in a few days have shaken that stern worker out of his arduous striving the ignominy

was more agonising to Sarmila than the actual pain of her disease. ( 79 )

Urmimala in her intoxication of love and also freedom from Nirad's routine became ignorant about her sister's agony. As days pass on Sasanka is attracted towards Urmimala more and more, forgetful of his duties and the existence of Sarmila. Urmimala realizes her fault when she comes to know about the problems caused by her in Sasanka's business. Uneasiness gripes her now and she becomes conscious of her duty. She returns home and tries to concentrate on her studies to accomplish the work for which she took an oath before her father.

Nirad wrote a letter from London, demanding money for his research there, despite his avowed refusal to accept a single penny. He also wrote a second letter conveying his intention to break his betrothal with Urmi and marry a European woman. Thus, Nirad's despicable nature came to light. His high principles evaporate before some desires. His mask is pulled off by his own self only and the selfish nature is revealed.

Urmi, after getting these letters feels an excitement, hitherto unknown. She gets freedom from Nirad and her joy knows no bound. Tagore describes her state of mind as follows,



No sooner had she perused its contents than she gave a leap of joy. She felt like dancing, but not being used to that art, she snatched the Sitar lying on her bed and, without bothering to tune it, began to draw all sorts of frenzies out of it.

( 94-95 )

This situation prompts us to sum up that Urmi's mind was forcibly tied to an orthodox sham. The spell of his knowledge had already disappeared even before she felt attracted towards Sasanka. Nirad always tried to direct her but never tried to understand her feeling. In presence of Nirad she could never feel that she was beautiful while she feels that Sasanka makes her realise that she is so attractive. It is only with Sasanka she feels that she can fascinate others. Urmi's real nature, her existence is eclipsed in presence of Nirad. In fact, this is the reason that Urmi gets attracted towards Sasanka as she sees the lively, lighthearted person who is totally different from Nirad. Tagore says' "She could not help contrasting him with Sasanka." ( 85 )

Nirad is not only passionless but is also a man without the sense of humour. For Sasanka, it is a kind of desire what a man needs from beloved but for Urmi it is an escape from bitter reality. It is an escape from her rigid routine life, as she cannot be bound by anyone. For Sasanka too, Urmi's arrival comes with a change in his

well-organized life where his each and every comfort was taken care of. Though Urmi could not look after everything in the house her shortcomings also became a source of enjoyment. Tagore states,

The fact that Urmi never seemed worried, never looked miserable, never felt ashamed of little mishaps, but always overflowed with enthusiasm in whatever she did helped considerably to lighten the strain on Sasanka's mind of his own heavy responsibility of work. ( 68 )

Urmi after receiving the letter from Nirad feels overjoyed. As soon as she comes to know about Nirad's marriage with someone else, her attachment to Sasanka becomes more intense as the forbidding force gave way. Her joy is doubled as Sasanka comes to call her back. She returns to Sasanka's place without protest and enjoy a car driving at a break neck speed. This speed image symbolizes their romance that "ran hot in their blood and would not subside. This turbulence of blood made them blind to all sense of responsibility, fear or shame". ( 99 )

Sarmila kept on watching everything silently, but she could not keep mum when she came to know about the collapse in Sasanka's business. She scolded

Urmi as she distracted him from his work. Urmi is "awakened to a sense of never-achieved responsibility".

( Chakrabarti : 66 )

Urmi disappears after Sarmila's miraculous recovery. In spite of her sister's proposal to be co-wives, she leaves her home never to return. She left for Europe to be a doctor to fulfill her life's mission, to redeem her pledge.

Urmimala's decision shows her propitious and independent spirit, though she strayed from her path and became love blind for her brother-in-law. Despite her infatuation for Sasanka, Urmi is never shown revealing her love to Sasanka. We may say that she is not like Binodini who wants to tempt a man to whom she felt attracted. She is not even jealous of her sister Sarmila rather she loves her. It is only the freedom from the prison-like life that makes her blind morally. As if Tagore wants to show that woman may be forgetful of her duty but she always comes back on her own path and thinks about welfare of the person whom she loves. Urmi like *Urvashi* or *Menaka* comes in the life of Sarmila and Sasanka who makes Sasanka crazy about her. It is the spell of beloved that makes Sasanka ignorant of his work and wife too. The woman in Urmimala awakes and she leaves Sasanka forever to make her sister happy again.

Thus, Tagore shows a sensitive, Zealous, youthful, lively and cheerful woman in Urmi. Urmi may

forget her sense of duty for a while but it is not like man that circumstances make him realize everything. Urmi takes the proper decision even when circumstances were in her favour. Tagore shows Urmi passive in so many situations yet imparts her individual spirit at the right moment because he believes that woman is always strong and able to take the proper and propitious decision. Urmi has not lost anything but gained everything at last.

Life has become richer  
by the love that has been lost.

( Tagore : Greetings of Sunrise, 18 )

Sarala :- A Restrained Beloved

Sarala appears in the novel The Garden, as the counterpart of Urmimala of Two Sisters, as the "other" to destroy the marital frame. However, she is different from Urmimala as she is sober and silent. Sarala is not gay, playful and talkative like Urmimala but she is a lady of few words. Tagore shows "the another side of the beloved type of woman". ( Chakrabarti : 68 )

Sarala is the beloved who has not lost her sense of duty, who does not come on the way of success of the man she loves.

Sarala, as her name suggests, is a simple-minded girl. Sarala being an orphan was brought up by her uncle along with Aditya. Poverty and adversity had

made her aware of her own limitations. She developed a sense of liking for Aditya but could not express it properly. Ofcourse, Niraja's taunts have made her aware of her love for Aditya. She is frank enough to confess while talking to Ramen....

I had never looked into my own mind before, but now the flame of Baudi's passion has lighted up its dark recess, and I could see myself. ( 149-150 )

Aditya, who loves his wife Niraja truly, also realizes his feelings for Sarala. Aditya has called Sarala to help him, as his wife is unable to work in the garden due to her serious illness. Aditya is not just a florist but he and his wife get aesthetic pleasure while working together in the garden. They love flowers and recognize themselves among them. For Niraja, the garden is her own 'self'. As Niraja is critically ill, she is unable to help him, watches the garden from her bedside window. Now a possessive woman in Niraja cannot tolerate Sarala working in her own garden.

Niraja's jealousy tends both Sarala and Aditya to realize love for each other. Aditya, like Sarala, has the same sense of belated realization.

There is no way out – I will not permit it. I love you. It fills my heart with joy that I

can say this so easily and truthfully. What was hidden all these twentythree years in bud has, thank god, blossomed forth today. I tell you, I would be a coward and untrue to myself to suppress it. ( 153 )

Sarala has not admitted before Aditya that she had not got married because she loved him only. Even when Aditya asked her she could not express the truth, but it seems that she hides the fact, as she believes, "What is the use of rebelling against what must be accepted now"? ( 153 )

Sarala and Aditya come to the point of compromise in love while Niraja lies crippled in her sickbed. In a way, they make her responsible for their infatuation. In moments of privacy in their behaviour they contradict Sasanka and Urmimala of Two Sisters. Sasanka praises his sick wife even before Urmi and Urmi too seeks her permission before she gives her consent to anything.

Sarala is not assertive. She is a girl of a few words and puts up with suffering of all sorts without complaint. Tagore shows the power of endurance is innate in woman through the character of Sarala. She says to Aditya, "You men fight with sorrow, while women have always meekly endured it". ( 151 )

Her spinsterhood proves in fact her true but hidden love for Aditya. Aditya knew that she had so many suitors but had not got married. Aditya learnt this later, he lamented in a voice choked with repentance, "Why did I blunder into the marriage? You never blundered.." (153) She does not protest when Aditya proposes love after ten years of his marriage with Niraja.

Niraja wants that Sarala must marry Ramen. It appears to be an attempt by Niraja to safeguard her total possession of Aditya's love. In spite of this Sarala does not falter. She is drawn to Ramen but considers him as a mentor and guide only. Though she loves Aditya, she is aware of the agony of the sick woman, Niraja. Niraja insults her like anything yet she performs her duties to her sincerely. Her sense of duty prevents her to snatch away the right of Niraja. She retorts, "Please Aditya, don't say any more, don't add to my pain. Let me be calm and think coolly." ( 153 )

Sarala knows how to suffer and yet not to react; when suffering becomes unbearable, she escapes. When Niraja's jealousy made Aditya angry and he expressed his anger in a letter, Sarala considered herself more responsible for that. Sarala slips into the freedom movement. Her imprisonment helped almost providentially to free her from entanglement of her relation with Aditya. She is genial in spirit as she implores Aditya to cleanse Niraja's mind of all sorts of

misgivings before her death. Her sense of understanding makes her dignified beside Niraja's "poverty of heart".

Tagore shows an emancipated woman in Sarala. She is an educated woman who dares to remain spinster in the early twentieth century India. She is aware of the problems of her own and also of the country. Her imprisonment appears as an attempt to make Aditya free from the domestic crisis shows her selfless spirit.

Sarala is shown by Tagore as a new woman of his time who is aware of the problems of the changing world. Sarala is simple, large-hearted and responsible woman. Sarala again reveals Tagore's faith in the propitious nature of woman. Sarala thinks of the jealous Niraja and her happiness. Tagore also gives his active support to women for their participation in the freedom movement through the character of Sarala. In fact, we can say that Sarala enjoys a unique position in the gallery of Tagore's heroines.

Sucharita and Lolita :- Women of New India

Sucharita and Lolita appear in Tagore's Gora, which is a novel with epic dimensions, revealing a crosscurrent of ideas. The background of the novel is the political and social realities of the time then, therefore it is obvious that most of the characters reveal their ideas on politics, religion and socio-economic problems



enthusiastically. Here the young women Sucharita and Lolita, like any man, exhibit greater intellectual acumen and social awareness. Love the ingrained feeling in woman is as if hidden behind the power of their intellect, but slowly and surely it overpowers them. Love wins over their all other ideals regarding religion, politics and society.

Here, Tagore's multifaceted love is revealed. With the love of culture, love of mother and motherland, love of friends, love of sisters, he also presents the love between man and woman. As Tagore is always interested in Life, love the voice of life becomes louder than any other voice of 'politics', 'religion' and 'revolution'.

Though Gora is an orthodox Hindu, Sucharita a Brahmo woman enters in his life. Sucharita is a beautiful young woman whose beauty works like a magic on Binoy's mind when he saw her for the first time. Tagore captures the emotional impact thus,

He was not skilled in scrutinizing the details of feminine features, but in that youthful face, bowed in affectionate anxiety, it seemed to Binoy as if a new world of tender brightness had been unfolded before him.( 2 )

Every movement of Sucharita impressed Binoy deeply. Her handkerchief became an invaluable treasure for Binoy and he preserves it as memento. He could see her wonderful eyes and also an "impression of sincerity" in them. ( 3 ) Thereafter, he readily accepts the invitation of Paresh Babu and Sucharita even though they were Brahmos and it was deemed a taboo, for the Hindus, to call on them. Gora, Binoy's intimate friend warns him for such a decision. There is no other way of salvation for a Hindu, who entangles himself with a Brahmo. In Gora's estimation for such a fallen fellow, "there is not next, after you are dead and gone from your own world." ( 8 )

All warnings by Gora failed as Binoy had already entered in the new world. Besides, he was a man who was "largely guided by the heart". ( 15 ) Gora cannot understand Binoy's feelings but Tagore suggests that even the antagonists of love prove themselves ardent lovers in course of time. Gora, who is indifferent to such seeling, also feels the force of love, later.

Binoy accepted Pareshbabu's invitation and went to his place. He was exposed to a world hither unknown to him. He met Sucharita, Labonya, Lolita and Lila who transported him to a world of imagination.

Binoy met Baroda who was Pareshbabu's wife and was proud to be a Brahmo. Baroda liked to show how cultured and foreward her family was! Sucharita was not her daughter but they had brought her up from

childhood. Baroda changed her name from Radharani to Sucharita as she believed that her name was orthodox. Baroda never missed a chance to praise her daughters and their skills in presence of a visitor. Labonya was her eldest daughter who was dark complexioned young girl. She was a nice, cheerful, gossip-loving girl. She was good at copying English poems in her album. Binoy could see the difference between the girls of this family and the young and uneducated girls of Bengal of that time. Binoy admired that "for in those days it reflected no small credit on a girl to be able to copy English poetry so well." ( 62 )

Baroda's youngest daughter, Lila, was only ten years old. She was a tomboy.

Lolita, the middle daughter was different from others, she was taller, darker and a thin young girl. She, unlike her elder sister, did not follow her mother's rules. She was very intelligent and sharp. Baroda, who kept Labonya and others under her control "was afraid of her, and took care not to rouse her temper." ( 48 ) Baroda informed Binoy that Lolita was very brave since her childhood. Binoy was trying to be familiar with them all but it was difficult for him.

Binoy was also introduced by Baroda to polished Sudhir and erudite PanBabu alias Haran. He was impressed beyond measure. Just at the moment of total absorption Gora entered the scene and Binoy was crest fallen. Gora appears as a crude, orthodox and

superstitious Hindu as a contrast to the refined Brahmos of PareshBabu's household. Most refined and genial of them all was Sucharita, Paresh Babu's niece. When Gora entered into a critical dialogue on orthodox and modern views of life with Haran and it seemed endless, every other members of the family along with Binoy departed. Only Sucharita stuck to the place sincerely wishing Gora a defeat. It was because his very presence generated an unknown dislike in her heart for Gora. In course of discussion Gora could strike the inner cord of Sucharita's heart.

Sucharita could not understand but she was being attracted towards Gora. She could discover something disappointing in Haran's nature. Sucharita is an educated and intelligent young girl who does not like anyone who is rude and irrational. Sucharita could notice that Gora paid no attention to her. Sucharita wanted him to pay attention to her but for Gora it was unnatural to talk to any young girl. Tagore observed,

Of Sucharita he took not the slightest notice, for to have shown by the least gesture that he was noticing her presence would to him have been the height of rudeness. ( 63 )

Thus, artistically Tagore brought them together who are variously different in nature to suggest that love is realized through conflicting situations too.

Tagore observes that there are unending conflicts in things but gradually they reach a point of reconciliation. It is the process of creation. He discovers the paradoxical nature of creation while discussing realization in love,

We have what we call in Sanskrit *dvanda*, a series of opposites in creation, such as the positive pole and the negative, the centripetal and the centrifugal, attraction and repulsion. These are mere names, they are no explanations. They are only different ways of asserting that the world in its essence is a reconciliation of pairs of opposing forces. These forces, like the left and the right hands of the creator, are acting in absolute harmony, yet acting from opposite directions.

( Tagore : Sadhana, 79 )

Sucharita and Gora met in a hostile manner and departed rather discourteously. Both are opposite to each other in their dress, manner and attitudes. Despite all these, both fell in love with each other without notice.

It is Sucharita, a woman, who feels the love for Gora after her encounter with Gora. She became restless and could not understand the reason behind such a state of mind. At times she thought that it was Gora's rudeness that hurt her. At the other point she concluded that it was perhaps Haran's defiance that caused her suffering. Gora's neglect makes her restless yet she was getting attracted towards Gora. Tagore aptly notes her mental state,

That evening, in whatever she did when at her meal or while telling Lila stories, Sucharita was conscious of some growing pain, deep down her being, which kept on hurting her. A thorn can only be extracted if you know where it is, and Sucharita sat alone on the Verandah trying to locate the thorn, which so galled her. She tried, in the cool of the darkness, to allay the uncalled for fever of her heart, but all in vain. ( 66 )

Sucharita, not only sat before him for two three hours but also took part in arguments, yet Gora did not look at her. Gora's indifference makes her so restless that she reveals her heart to Lolita. Lolita loves her sister Sucharita and tries to understand her dilemma. Infact,

Lolita very clearly asks questions which make Sucharita to speak about him. Both the sisters discussed the pros and cons of Gora's mannerism. Lolita praised Binoy very much and it seems that she is also being drifted towards him but still it is not realized.

After the discussion got over, Lolita was lost into the world of blissful slumber but Sucharita could not sleep well. She woke up at two o'clock and could not sleep again. She remembered all the incidents of that evening. Tagore reveals her love lorn mind,

The picture of Gora's face, all aglow with excitement and lighted by the rays of the setting sun, flashed out, and all the arguments which she had heard, but forgotten, now came back to her together with the sound of his deep, strong voice.

( 69 )

Thus, the intellectual discussion was forgotten. Sucharita forgot everything and the dialogue on nationalism, culture and religion gave birth to love.

Both Gora and Binoy too felt the force of love but gradually. It is Binoy who experienced love at first and narrated to Gora his inner feelings. Tagore puts it in the following words,

....Binoy began to unfold to Gora, as best as he could, the wonderful experience which had come into his life. Now-a-days he averred, it seemed as if all his days and nights enveloped him completely as if the sky had no gap in but was filled with sweetness, like the beehive with honey in the spring time. Everything now-a-days came close to him, touched him, had for him a new meaning.( 76 )

Binoy's realization of love's sweet sensations is natural, and it inspires him to do everything for all. He realizes that now he is under the spell of love. It is the power of love that gives him courage to reveal his heart before Gora of whom he is afraid. His love for Gora, his friend, makes him accept Gora's opinion often but this time he gathers the courage to express his love for Lolita. He was being drifted towards Lolita's beauty and intelligence.

Gora succumbs to love slowly but steadily. It is Sucharita who wins over Gora's allegiance to cults and conventions. Sisirkumar Ghose says in this connection,

Deeply held beliefs are the index of a personality and Gora has plenty of both. He is not immune from change and love.



And it is Sucharita rather than Pareshbabu that helps to bring about the change.

( Ghose : 73 )

Thus, Sucharita is one of the heroines of Tagore, who is not just beautiful but intelligent, confident, educated, curious and rational young woman. Sucharita can reject the narrowness of her aunt Harimohini too. She can see through Haran's hypocrisy. She is courageous to reject the proposal of her marriage. It is she who makes Gora realize the fact that man alone cannot serve his country; he needs the vision of woman too. Sucharita's faith is so sound that she firmly believes that Gora must come in search of her. Though 'determination' is the nature of Sucharita, she does everything 'passively'. Sometimes her passive and obedient personality makes her hide her own feelings, yet she gets what she wants. As a true lover Sucharita excels in self-extinction. She listens to the voice of her heart like most of Indian women. She, not only changed her attitude but also accepted Gora's views. She, like any Indian woman rejoices even in forgetting the 'self'. Sucharita's silent and authentic love for Gora is the love that overcomes all the socio-religious barriers. Their love is the love of "true hearts, true minds".

Lolita, a middle daughter of Pareshbabu, a broad-minded Brahmo, is a courageous young girl. Her mother Baroda, who seems to be a selfish fanatic woman, always talks about her daughters and their knowledge of culture and English literature. Lolita is shown as a girl who has her 'own rules' to follow, she never behaves like a puppet in her mother's hands. Baroda may select the dress or sandal for her elder daughter Labonya but she dare not suggest anything to Lolita.

Lolita is a matchless character in Tagore's novels. She does not care for consequences when truth is in question. Her courage and love for truth make her stand still for truth. She never gives in at any point of time. Lolita's distinct personality attracted Binoy and Binoy fell in love with her.

Binoy's love for his friend Gora and orthodox Hindu-values became obstacles on his path of love but love always finds its way. Binoy, as it is discussed earlier, revealed his feelings to Gora. Gora, too, tried to understand his feelings though it was difficult for him.

In Lolita the symptoms of love appeared clearer after her fateful boat journey with Binoy. Both of them thought it wiser not to meet each other frequently, but could not bear the separation. A storm rose in Lolita's heart and she fought against it to save herself from it. She becomes restless like any lover. She is uneasy either in the presence or in the absence of Binoy. She, from the

very beginning, when Binoy came her home for the first time, got attracted towards him. She asked, her sister Sucharita, who was very intimate to her, about Binoy's nature indirectly. She could see everyone, including Sucharita, in her family, praising Binoy.

Lolita, from the very beginning, is never confused regarding her social status and that of Binoy's. Infact, social opposition strengthened her will power gradually. Unkind criticism of the friends around made her braver. Out of desperation she resolved to love Binoy crossing the barriers of caste and creed.

HarenBabu and the other Brahmo activists conspired against Lolita. They wrote anonymous letters to her and published articles in Brahmo journals demeaning the status of Lolita in particular and PareshBabu's family in general. These cowardly actions reacted in the strongminded Lolita. Instead of compromising with Brahmo activists, Lolita rebelled against it. Her resolve in love became stronger than ever before. Binoy also responded to her love. He was ready to marry her but he could also see to reactions of both the societies. He knew that The Hindus and The Brahmos might not accept their love.

Binoy, once an ardent votary of Hinduism, decided to convert himself from Hindu to Brahmo. The aggressive Brahmo HarenBabu compelled him to make an official declaration and to appeal to HaranBabu to be

his initiator. Binoy was shocked to see Haran's narrowness, so he wanted PareshBabu as his initiator who was a reverent person for him. PareshBabu, Lolita's father was a true Brahmo who did not believe that such conversation was necessary to marry his daughter. He was against such irrational demand from the Brahmos. He knew that religion is a matter of realization, and no force, direct or indirect, should be applied to convert a person from one faith to another. BarodaSundari, on the other hand, was eager to bring Binoy into the *Brahmo Samaj*, being well-educated an understanding young man, Baroda thinks of her social status rather than Binoy's sentiments or feelings as she does not know the language of heart. Anandamoyi, Gora's mother, a Hindu woman, on the other hand accepts the union between Binoy and Lolita wholeheartedly. Both PareshBabu and Anandamoyi though belonged to different cults, believed in the same faith-the faith in truth. Both of them very well knew that God never wishes man's division in the narrow-minded sects. T. R. Sharma writes in this connection,

He knows that the true path is followed only by those like Anandmoyi, Binoy, PareshBabu, Sucharita and Lolita, who though belonging to the opposite sects,

do not allow their religious views to create  
a gulf between man and man.

( Sharma : 67 )

Lolita does not approve of Binoy's willingness to embrace the Brahmo cult. Rather she feels humiliated for this weakness. In fact, from the very first meeting with Binoy and Gora, she could see Binoy under the influence of Gora. She wanted to make him free from that slavery of mind so she actively began to liberate Binoy from the power of Gora. Lolita told Sucharita that Binoy's true personality was hidden behind Gora's extraordinary personality. Lolita wanted to make Binoy stronger.

Lolita selected the way of taunting so make him realize his weakness. Lolita deliberately startles Binoy by requesting him that he should take her party to see the circus. Binoy hesitates to go along with the girls, rather he is dumbfounded at this proposal. It is the right time for Lolita to say, "I suppose, Gouramohan Babu will be angry, will he?" ( 126 ) Lolita deliberately asks Gora's views about taking girls to the circus. Not only this but she adds few words bitterly: "What makes you laugh, BinoyBabu? Yesterday you told Satish that girls are afraid of tigers-aren't you ever afraid of anyone?" ( 126 )

Lolita was angry with Gora as he overpowered his friend Binoy. For Binoy it may be love for his friend but Lolita calls it 'slavery'. Her determination is so

powerful that the next time she meets Binoy she restarts, "Have you told Gouramohan Babu about your visit to the circus the other day?" ( 126 ) At this Binoy simply blushes but also realizes what Lolita says about him. Lolita, again drags him perform in a play with her. She keeps on hurting Binoy by her needless mockery. Her intention is pure but the way she has selected, hurts Binoy and her own self too. Once she sent two red roses to Binoy through Satish, her cousin. Binoy went to her on the same day and said that the flowers were beautiful but had the tinge of anger about them. Lolita blushed, as she didn't want Binoy to know that she had sent flowers as peace-offerings.

In fact Lolita is a sharp and active young girl with so many differences of opinion. Baroda was ever anxious about Lolita who was darker in complexion and more and more complex in personality. But the father knows her daughter very well. Tagore says,

But the beauty with PareshBabu saw in her face was not that of complexion or features, but of the soul which there found its expression,- not just the pleasantness of a faultless shape but the firmness of strength, the brightness of independence,- characteristics which attract few but repel most others. ( 231 )

Lolita can say anything to anyone, if she considers it to be true. She can cut Haran to his size whenever necessary. There is a great difference between Lolita and her beloved sister Sucharita. She obeys the orders so silently that Lolita cannot even put up with her silent obedience. It is Lolita only who can say to narrow minded Harimohini about her faith; "You not only have no faith, but what is more, you don't even know that you haven't." ( 273 )

Lolita neither asks Binoy to be Brahmo nor is she prepared to worship idols at the time of marriage. She is the first character in the novel to plead that there is no need for conversion for the sake of marriage between persons of different cults.

Thus, Tagore created Lolita as a new woman. She is not a traditional Indian woman to play a passive role. She is a well-educated free-willed young woman who values dignity of the individual in the society. Her attitude towards love as a universal phenomenon is based on true observation and is, therefore acceptable.

Thus, Tagore shows an Indian woman who is intelligent yet obedient, shy and devoted, firm yet passive through the portrayal of Sucharita. On the contrary, he shows a new woman of India in Lolita who believes in individuality. Her identity as a woman never comes on her way as an obstacle. She is active, truth-loving and

eloquent young woman. Anila Dalal compares the pair of Sucharita and Lolita with the pair of Kumud and Kusum in Govardhanram Tripathi's Sarswatichandra. Kabir states about them both,

Lifelong friends and with deep affection for one another, they are young women of great beauty and charm. While Lolita is exuberant and full of spirit Sucharita is gentle, devout and deep. Lolita's strength expresses itself in revolt but Sucharita has the patience and endurance of mother earth. ( Kabir : 44 )

Tagore shows these two young women belonging to the family where women are not compelled to live in *Zenana*. On the contrary, woman is given respect as well as education in this family. Even the birthday of the daughter is celebrated joyfully in this family. Daughters cannot only sit with the visitors but also can express their views while taking part in the intellectual discussions. Tagore, in fact, wanted all this freedom for the woman of this country.

( D ) Mother :



Tagore's portrayal of mother is really unique. Ofcourse, he has not portrayed many women primarily as mothers, yet whatever he has done is certainly moving and touching.

Anadamoyi :- An incarnation of universal love

Anandmoyi appears in Gora as the Brahmin mother of Gora. Anandmoyi may not be regarded as – Tagore's heroine, who is either a young beloved or a wife. She is the mother first who has the pure and loving heart, free from any narrowness of religion or society.

Anandamoyi is Krishnadayal Babu's wife. Because of his service in the Government, he spent so many years away from Bengal with Anandamoyi. Anandmoyi, therefore, does not follow the dresscode of the Bengali women of then time. Tagore says,

One thing about her struck all her acquaintances, namely, that with her *sari* she wore a bodice. At the time of which we are speaking, though certain modern young women had begun to adopt it as part of their dress, ladies of the old school looked askance at the wearing of a bodice as savouring of Christianity.....

she had no idea that to cover the body properly was a matter to be ashamed of or to laugh at. ( 14 )

Anandamoyi loves Gora as well as Binoy - his friend, just like her own son. She has love and compassion for her Christian maidservant Lachmi. Even KrishnaDayal was broad minded but in his old age, he became orthodox and intolerant. Anandamoyi does not insist Gora and his father to eat the food cooked by Lachmi but she relishes it naturally. When Gora stops Binoy to eat that food, Anandamoyi tries to persuade Gora that love for humanity is above all the religions.

Gora does not know the reality that he is a son of Irish couple but the mother says it indirectly that symbolizes her pure love which has no barrier of castes or even nations. She says to Gora,

But do you know that it was when I first took you in my arms that I said good-bye to convention? When you hold a little child to your breast then you feel certain that no one is born into this world with caste. ( 17 )

Gora is proud of her loving mother, but he never accepts her large-heartedness until he comes to

know the truth of his birth. Binoy sometimes feels that she has some secret of her mind to share with them. He also can notice the difference between Anandamoyi's dark and Gora's fair complexion but no one doubts that Anandamoyi is not Gora's mother. Gora believes that Mother is the sublime status of woman, so he says to Binoy, "The alter at which woman may truly worshipped is her place as Mother, the seat of the pure, right minded Lady of the House". ( 12 ) And Gora is fortunate to have such a mother like Anandamoyi. Binoy, too, considers her as his own mother. Binoy respects and cares for Anandamoyi's beliefs even more than Gora. He cannot even think of rejecting the food offered by her. He said to her even in his thoughts, "No scripture shall prove to me that food from you hand is not nectar for me". ( 22 )

If Lolita tried to make Binoy free from Gora's influence by hurting him, Anandamoyi did it very easily with the power of love. She helped Binoy to be free from the orthodoxy and limitations of caste and creed.

KrishnaDayal's questions regarding Gora are solved very easily by Anandamoyi. She does not mind if her husband may not give his all the wealth to Gora as she has faith in Gora's education and upbringing. With regard to Gora's marriage, KrishnaDayal is anxious as he is an Irish boy whose father died in the Mutiny and mother, after giving birth to him. Anandamoyi likes the idea of her husband to meet the daughters of

PareshBabu, a Brahmo. But she also knows that Gora cannot come out of his staunch beliefs regarding Hinduism.

Anandamoyi is free from all sorts of narrow "isms". She "represents the best of both Indian tradition and Western liberalism". ( Sarada : 74 )

In her personality Anandamoyi appears as the universal mother. For Tagore, she is the mother India. "...none shall be turned away from the shore of this vast sea of humanity that is India". ( as quoted in Kripalani : 210 )

Anandamoyi developed from a conventional Hindu-wife to generous mother who knows only one religion-the religion of universal love. She embodied all the great and good qualities of India of Tagore's dreams. Kabir says, "Anandamoyi is good because she is happy and she is happy because she is good." ( Kabir: 44 )

Gora, when realizes the truth, turns to her and says,

Mother, you are my mother!...The mother whom I have been wondering about in search of was all the time sitting in my room at home. You have no caste, you make no distinctions, and have no hatred-you are only the image of our welfare! It is you who are India! ( 570 )

Tagore shows the best picture of free India here through the character of Anandamoyi. Such a magnified motherhood exalted Gora as only she could create possibility for realization of love and life.

#### ( E ) Minor Women Characters :

Tagore represents the various facets of the Indian womanhood in his novels. In addition to the discussed principal women characters in main roles in the novels, Tagore has also portrayed a number of minor women characters. We can not ignore their significance, as their roles are very meaningful.

In the vast range of minor women characters in Tagore's novels, there are some rigid women too. Harimohini and Baroda Sundari ( Gora ), Nabinkali ( The Wreck ) etc. are the women who represent something unpleasant in them. Harimohini and Baroda hold particular views about their own cult of religion, which make these women disrespect others' religion. Nabinkali is a crooked woman who never understands Kamala's feelings rather she treats her as a servant only. Bimala's sisters-in-law ( The Home and The World ) are the widows who are jealous as they have been deprived of blissful happy life. Being a widow, woman has to suffer from so many agonies and pains in the society. Some of them become

spiritual while some jealous. Even Shyama ( Yogayog ) is a widow who is envious and lustful to some extent.

Sailaja ( The Wreck ), Nabin's wife ( Yogayog ), Yogamaya ( Farewell, My Friend ) are the women who are friendly towards others. They help, they advise, they guide, they console and they share their happiness with others.

Keti, BimiBose, Lily Ganguli, Lissie and Cissie ( Farewell, My Friend ) are the young girls who are under the impact of westernization, which Tagore never favoured. Their ways of life, their beauty lacked naturalness.

Labonya and Lila ( Gora ) are young girls who have got English education, yet Indianness is preserved in them which is obvious from their behaviour with others.

Nanibala ( Chaturanga ) is the victim of the man-made society. She dies, as her seducer has not taken the responsibility of her child, still to be born. She sacrifices, even though Sachis wants to save her by marrying her.

Haribhabhini ( The Wreck ) and Annapurna ( Eye Sore ) are loving aunts who guide and help the people whenever necessary.

Kshemankari is a mother who is broad minded and generous. Though she is a Bramin, she is ready to accept a Brahmo girl Hemnalini as her daughter-in-law. It is she, about whom her son says that she shall very easily forgive Kamala and accept her whole-heartedly.

## References

- Chakrabarti, Santosh, Studies in Tagore Critical Essays, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.
- Ghose, Sisirkumar, Rabindranath Tagore, Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1986.
- Kabir, Humayun, The Bengali Novel, Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Kripalani, Krishna, Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography, London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Sarada, M., Rabindranath Tagore : A study of women characters in his Novels, New Delhi: Sterling, 1988.
- Sharma, T.R., (Eds.) Perspectives on Rabindranath Tagore, Delhi: Vimal Prakashan, 1986.
- Singh, K.H. Kunjo, Humanism and Nationalism in Tagore's Novels, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002.
- Tagore, Rabindranath, Binodini, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Chokher Bali (1903), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Wreck, Trans. J.G. Drummon from Nauka Dubi (1906), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Gora, Trans. W.W. Pearson from Gora (1910), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Home and The World, Trans. Surendranath Tagore from Ghare-Baire (1916), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Chaturanga, Trans. Ashok Mitra from Chaturanga (1916), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Farewell, My Friend, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Sesher Kabita (1929), Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1999.

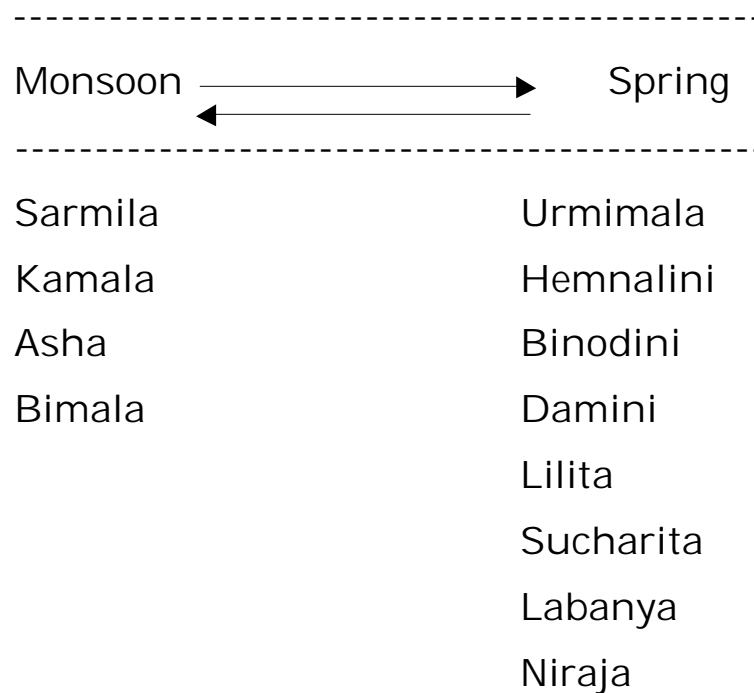
\_\_\_\_\_. Two Sisters, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from *Dui Bon* (1933), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Garden, Trans. Krishna Kripalani from *Malancha* (1934), Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. Sadhana, London: MacMillan and Co. limited, 1957.

( A )

The Artist Tagore's women



( B ) The ultimate facet of woman – An ocean of love and compassion :-

Anandmoyi



( C ) The Nationalist Tagore's women

Bimala

Sarala

Ela

Sucharita

Lolita

## CHAPTER-5

### CONCLUSION

This critical study of the different portrayals of women in Tagore's novels enables us to say that: Tagore, excellently and unconventionally portrays woman in his novels. Tagore knew the undeniable presence and significance of woman in society. He surpasses Bankimchandra, a pioneer of the Bengali novel in his depiction of woman.

Tagore has respect, love and sympathy for woman in general and Indian woman in particular. Vivekananda had said that women's miseries can be more understood by women rather than men, yet it seems, may be as an exceptional case that Tagore feels the same agonies and pains that a woman has to undergo. He not only writes for woman, but also writes like a woman feeling the torments what woman has to suffer from.

Tagore the novelist was a realist who had deep interest in 'Life'. He, therefore, recognized the importance of woman, the source of life. The wide gamut of the different portrayals of woman in Tagore's novels enunciates his thorough understanding of truly feminine emotions and speculations. The critical study of his novels shows that his women are more colourful, more convincing and more lively than men.

It is taken for granted that a woman is supposed to build her character on the notion of what men would want women to be. Woman is supposed to serve man and behave according to his whims and wants. A man's responsibilities as such do not ever equal that of a woman. The man is free to do whatever he wishes to do while the woman is expected to restrain her desires. Woman's slavery is ever-present everywhere, however it has been softened with the sincere efforts of the intellectual thinkers and reformers of the society.

Tagore, before Gandhi and Nehru, questioned the prevailing double standards to judge men and women. His devotion to the women's problems aroused a sensitive awareness of the necessity for amelioration in women's condition. Tagore believed that our society should treat man and woman on a footing of perfect equality. His liberated outlook on the question of woman's position and status in the Indian society is ahead of times.

1. For Tagore, woman is not an object but self-conscious subject, who can, if she wishes, become

the arbiter of her own destiny. She is not a puppet in the hands of man. Nikhil in The Home and The World becomes the mouthpiece of Tagore and represents his strong belief that a woman is not destined to fulfill man's desires. Woman, for Tagore is never man's *Upobhogya* only. She serves man, because it is ingrained in her nature, but service cannot be the compulsion for her. Nikhil says that, if a man uses power to torture woman it is his inferiority or his doubt regarding his own power. Most of the heroines of Tagore exhibit his belief that women are not mere objects.

2. Tagore believes in 'Inborn equality' of man and woman. Tagore believes that man and woman are complementary to each other. One cannot exist without other. Though man and woman are not identical, they are equal by birth.
3. A determined woman can do anything that a man can. Tagore's woman is educated, intelligent, individual and efficient to accomplish the task she has undertaken.
4. Tagore's woman, though intellectual, shows his conviction that woman follows the judgement of her heart. Whenever there is struggle between 'head' and 'heart', Tagore's most intellectual heroines also, listen to the voice of the heart.

5. Tagore's woman is 'Love incarnated'. Tagore sees woman as the incarnation of love, for whom, love is the supreme feeling. She can never ignore the true love.
6. Tagore's woman accepts pleasure as well as pain as the two sides of a coin, with the conviction that spring follows winter. She accepts pleasure and pain both as the gifts of love, therefore she esteems the wound of love and cherish it forever.
7. For Tagore's woman, inner emancipation is more important than the external one.
8. Tagore's woman is least mindful of society, though not against it. Tagore's woman does not ignore the society. Although she respects the values of the society, she revolts against some rigid social customs, which are unjust and inhuman.
9. Tagore's woman has faith in Platonic love. Tagore shows that a woman does not suppress her pure feelings, however, she does not cross the limits in so far as physical desire is concerned.
10. Tagore believes that a widow should have the right to decide her course of life. Tagore shows that a woman who is widow should not be excluded from the joys of life. She has the right to live with all her desires and dreams. Tagore opines that the acceptance of widowhood should be voluntary

rather than enforceable. Tagore creates a reverential feeling for widows rather than a pitiful one.

11. Tagore shows that unpredictable is the heart of woman. Tagore dives deep into the woman's soul and declares that she is incalculable, and some of her actions are not understood by man.
12. Most of the heroines of Tagore are not shown as mothers but they are not deprived of motherly feelings. Tagore reveals the reality that some women are deprived of motherhood, which is one of the bitter realities, which should be accepted by the society without blaming them for it.
13. Tagore glorifies the motherly facet of woman although he focuses mainly on two facets of woman. i.e. a beloved and a mother. He shows that woman is always a mother whether she has a child of her own or not. Propitiousness is the nature of woman, even a beloved moves from that stage to the stage of mother.
14. Tagore does not show any woman as ignoble. Though it was a social reality that some women were dragged into the society of ignoble and low people, Tagore does not show any woman of that sort. Saratchandra, who was his contemporary, shows that some women are compelled to get involved in such low societies but Tagore's woman

remains away from any such lawlessness of the society.

15. Tagore does not show any of his heroines under the impact of westernization. She crosses the male-made threshold and enters all social and national domains without running a race with man, and does not underestimate the duty at home, i.e. Bimla left home for outer world in search of what she understands as freedom but could not stay there for long because the feelings, love that she had in the home, the pivot of her life, she could not get there. Thus Tagore shows that the Indian woman does not want freedom to that extent that she would feel emotional void.
16. Tagore's woman is conscious of her rights as well as duties.
17. Tagore's woman knows the problems of her nation.
18. Tagore believes that society is responsible to some extent, for whatever is unacceptable in woman. Tagore shows some of his women characters, especially from the spectrum of his minor women characters, having some weaknesses, which are unacceptable. However, he believes that man-made society is responsible to for such disagreeable facet of woman, as she has been socially walled since ages.

19. Tagore while writing on and about woman unknowingly wears the heart of woman.
20. Tagore's feelings for woman are the manifestation of his 'humanism', a true religion. Tagore shows that God knows no gender, and hence he himself is a humanist who does not consider woman as different from man. Often woman is called a *Devi*, and thus she is expected to cultivate some virtues, which are not possible for a human being to follow. That's why one of his women says, "*Aami Manush, Aami Devata Nei.*" Tagore's woman is not an idol who becomes stagnant but she is lively and active with all the pleasant qualities of humanbeings. If she has some follies sometimes, it is because she is a human being.

Thus, Tagore's portrayal of woman has the modernist stance. He is the harbinger and supporter of the winds of change regarding woman. Tagore, being an artist of high standards, does not play any stereotyped role of reformist or feminist. Anything that was good came to him in a natural way and so is the case with the emergence of a 'New Woman' in his novels.

The present study of woman in Tagore's novels tempts us to study Tagore's short stories too in which Tagore reveals excellence of his art while depicting woman. In his novels, he has not shown the heroines from the lower classes



of the society. The poverty they have to suffer from and the problems due to their being destitute have been touched upon very well in his short stories. Furthermore, Tagore's woman is delineated with modernist attitude in some of his well-known short stories. i.e. 'The wife's letter', 'Aparichita', 'Laboratory' etc. So the researcher suggests that there is a scope for the study of women in Tagore's shortstories separately.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources :

Tagore, Rabindranath. Binodini. Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Chokher Bali (1903), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1959.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Wreck. Trans. J.G. Drummon from Nauka Dubi (1906), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. Gora. Trans. W.W. Pearson from Gora (1910), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Home and The World. Trans. Surendranath Tagore from Ghare-Baire (1916), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. Chaturanga. Trans. Ashok Mitra from Chaturanga (1916), New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. Farewell, My Friend. Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Sesher Kabita (1929), Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. Two Sisters. Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Dui Bon (1933), New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Garden. Trans. Krishna Kripalani from Malancha (1934), Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. Four Chapters. Trans. Surendranath Tagore from Char Adhayay (1934), Calcutta: Visva-Bharati, 1943.

Secondary Sources :

( I ) Books : (English)

Apte, U.M. The Sacrament of Marriage in Hindu Society.  
Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1978.

Bhattacharya & Vivek, Rajan. Tagore's vision of a Global Family. New Delhi: Enkay Publishers, 1987.

Biswas, Dipti Kumar. Sociology of Major Bengali Novels.  
Gurgaon: The Academic Press, 1974.

Budholia, O.P. Critical Essays on Indian English Literature.  
Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2003.

Chakarabarti, Mohit. Rabindranath Tagore – Diverse Dimensions. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1990.

Chakrabarti, Santosh. Studies in Tagore Critical Essays.  
New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

Chakrabarti, Usha. Condition of Bengali Women. Calcutta:  
by the author, 1963.

Chatterji, Sunitikumar. World Literature and Tagore.  
Santiniketan: Viswa Bharati, 1971.

Chattopadhyay, Dipankar. Introduction to Tagore. Calcutta:  
Viswa Bharti, 1988.

Devendra, Kiran. Status and Position of Women in India.  
New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985.

Dutta Krishna and Robinson Andrew. Rabindranath Tagore An Anthology. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997.

Everett, Jana Matson. Women and Social Change in India.  
New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1981.

Gajendra Kumar. Indian English Literature. New Delhi:  
Sarup & Sons., 2001.

- Gandhi, M.K. India of My Dreams. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust, 1947.
- Gandhi, M.K. ( Chander, Jag Parvesh (Eds.) ) The Good Life. Lahore: Indian Printing Works, 1947.
- Ghose, Sisirkumar. Rabindranath Tagore. Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1986.
- Hudson, W.H. An Introduction to the Study of Literature. London: George G. Harper & Co. Ltd., 1958.
- Iyenger, K.R.S. Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Rabindranath Tagore – A Critical Introduction. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1965.
- Jain, Jasbir. Feminizing Political Discourse. (Women and the Novel in India) Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1997.
- Jain, Jasbir & Singh, Avadhesh Kumar. (Eds.) Findian Feminisms. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001.
- Jain, Jasbir. Writing Women Across Cultures. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2002.
- Jain, Pratibha & Mahan, Rajan. (Eds.) Women Images. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1996.
- Jayapalan, N. Women Studies. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2000.
- Kabir, Humayun. The Bengali Novel. Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
- Karmakar, Sumati. The Better Half – Mothers, Sisters, Wives & Homemakers. Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2001.
- Khan, M.Q., Khan, A.G. (Eds.) Changing Faces of Women in Indian Writing in English. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1995.

Kirpal Viney. The Girl child in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian Literature. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1992.

Kripalani, Krishna. Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Maurya, S.D. Women in India. Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1988.

Meghani Mahendra. (Compiled) Greetings of Sunrise from Tagore and Gandhi. Bhavnagar: Lokmilap Trust, 2003.

Mukerjee, Hiren. Rabindranath Tagore. Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1986.

Mukherjee, PrabhatKumar. Life of Tagore. (Tras. By Sisirkumar Ghose), New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1977.

Naik, M.K. A History of Indian English Literature. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982.

Nayar Sushila & Mankekar Kamala. Women Pioneers in India's Renaissance. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2002.

Padia, Chandrakala. (Eds.) Feminism, Tradition and Modernity. Shimla: The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2002.

Parikh, K.C. (Compiled) Homage to Tagore. (Tagore Birth – Centenary Lectures) Ahmedabad: Gujarat University, 1963.

Ray, Amitave. Modernism from and Tagore. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995.

Ray, Bharati. (Eds.) From the Seams of History – Essays on Indian Women. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.

- Ray, Mohit K. (Eds.) Studies on Rabindranath Tagore. Vol. I & II, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2004.
- Sarada, M. Rabindranath Tagore : A study of women characters in his Novels. New Delhi: Sterling, 1988
- Sarkar Tanika. Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001.
- Sastri, K.S. Ramaswami. Sir Rabindranath Tagore : His Life, Personality and Genius. Delhi: Akashdeep Publishing House, 1988.
- Saxena, R.K. Education and Social Amelioration of women. Jaipur: Sanghi Prakashan, 1978.
- Sen, Sukumar. The History of Bengali Literature. New Delhi: The Sahitya Akademi, 1979.
- Shastri, Shakuntala Rao. Women in the Vedic Age. (Eds.) K. M. Munahi and N.C. Aiyer, Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1954.
- Sharma, S.R. Life and Works of Rabindranath Tagore. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2003.
- Sharma, T.R. (Eds.) Perspectives on Rabindranath Tagore. Delhi: Vimal Prakashan, 1986.
- Singh Avadhesh K. (Eds.) Indian Renaissance Literature. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2003.
- Singh, K.H. Kunjo. Humanism and Nationalism in Tagore's Novels. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002.
- Skyes, Marjorie. The Story of Rabindranath Tagore. Patna: Orient Longman, 1976.
- Subbamma, Malladi. Women : (Tradition & Culture). New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1985.

- Tagore, Rabindranath. Broken Nest. (Transt. Mary M. Lago from Nastanid. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd., 1971. (Reprinted ) 2001.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. The Religion of Man. Calcutta: MacMillan India Ltd., 1932.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Nationalism. Calcutta: MacMillan India Ltd., 1950.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Man. London: MacMillan India Ltd., 1959.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. My Boyhood Days. Calcutta: Viswa-Bharati, 1997.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Personality. Calcutta: MacMillan India Ltd., 1917.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Creative Unity. Calcutta: MacMillan India Ltd., 1922.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Sadhana. London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1957.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Lectures and Address. Madras: MacMillan India Ltd., 1970.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. My Reminiscences. Madaras: MacMillan India Ltd., 1971.
- Urquhart Margaret M. Women of Bengal. Delhi: Cultural Publishing House, 1983 (Reprinted).
- Visva Bharati, Introduction to Tagore, Calcutta: 1982.

( II ) Books : (Gujarati)

Chattopadhyay, Saratchandra. Sharad Granthvali. Mumbai: Vora & Company, 1957.

( Trans. By Parekh Nagindas, Gandhi Bhogilal, Soni Ramanlal )

Dalal, Anila. *Ravindranath Ane Saratchandrana Kathasahityama Naari*. Ahmedabad: R.R. Sheth company, 1979.

Desai, Narayan. *Ravi Chhabi*. Ahmedabad: Balgovind Prakashan, 1979.

Deshpande P.L., Mehta Jaya. (Trans.) *Ravindranath : Tran Aakhyano*. Ahmedabad: Navbharat Sahitya Mandir, 1986.

Diwanji, Dhruman. (Eds.) *Stree Siddhina Sopano*. Ahmedabad: Gujarat Stree Kelavani Mandal, 1997.

Gandhi, Bhogilal. (Eds.) *Vishwa Manav*. Ahmedabad: Yashwant Printing Press, 1945.

Kalelkar, Kaka. Parekh Nagindas. (Trans.) *Shantiniketan*. Ahmedabad: Balgovind Prakashan, 1968.

Maitraiyeedevi. Maghani, Ramnik. (Trnas.) *Gurudev Aamaare Aangane*. Ahmedabad, R.R. Sheth Company, 1979.

Maitraiyeedevi. Parekh Nagindas. (Trans.) *Swargani Lagolag*. Ahmedabad, Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, 1985.

Pancholi, Manubhai. (Darshak) *Vageshwarina Karna Fulo*. Ahmedabad – Bombay: R.R. Sheth Company, 1990.

Parekh, Nagindas. *Ravindra Patramurmur*. Bhavnagar: Bhashantar Nidhi, 1986.



- Parekh, Nagindas. *Ravindra Purvacharit*. Gandhinagar: Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 1997.
- Sahitya Akademi. *Ravindra Nibandhmala 1 & 2*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1976.
- Shah, Kalpana. *Sahityama Naarichetana*. Surat: Lenci Lobo Centre for Social Studies, 1997.
- Shah, Kantilal M. *Kavivar Ravindranath Thakur : Jivan ane Kavan*. Bhavanagar: Samskar Sahitya Mandir, 1955.
- Shelat, Himanshi. *Gujarati Katha Sahityama Naari Chetana*. Ahmedabad: R.R. Sheth & Co. 2000.
- Soni, Ramanlal. (Compiled by) *Gupta Dhan*. Mumbai: Renuka Soni, 1998.
- Soni, Ramanlal. *Ravindra Tatvacharya* - Nagindas Parekh. Ahmedabad: Dr. Renuka S. Soni, Sarada Printing Press, 2002.
- Soni, Ramanlal. *Ravindranathno Sahitya – Varaso* Part – I to Part – VI. Bhavnagar: Lokmilap Trust, 1981.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Parekh Nagindas. (Trans.) *Sati*. Ahmedabad: Gurjar Granthratna Karyalaya, 1979.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *Yogayog*. New Delhi: Diamond Publications, 2002.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. Soni Ramanlal. (Trans.) (1) *Rajarishi* (2) *Vahurani*, 1968. Rajkot: Mihir Prakasan, 1987.

( II ) Articles :

Bhagat, Niranjana. " *Tagore Ane Gujarati Sahitya-Parishad*" Gujarat Samachar, 4<sup>th</sup> Sept., 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2006.

Bhattacharjee, Binoy. "Tagore as a social reformer", Universality of Tagore. Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1991.

Bhattacharya, Bhabani. "Tagore as a Novelist", Rabindranath Tagore. A Centenary Volume, The Sahitya Akademi, 1861-1961.

Chaudhari, Raghuvir. " *Pragatishil Sahityani Upeksha Gujaratne Sadi Gaye Chhe?*", *Shabdlok*. Divya Bhaskar, Page-2, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2006.

Dave, Mahesh. " *Saradbabuni Kirtida Kruti Devdaas Sabdasrusti*. (Monthly) (Eds.) Harshad Trivedi No.7 July, 2002.

Joshi, Dinakar. " *Pravasi Paravarna*". Series *Samkalin*. Ahmedabad: Indian Express Group, 2003.

Mehta Ela Aarab. " *Sahityama Narivad Kai Rite Zilayo Chhe*", *Shabdlok*. Divya Bhaskar, Page-1, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006.

Patel, Bholobhai. (Eds.) *Parab*. Ahmedabad, Gujarat Sahitya Parishad, 1990.

Srivastava, Sarad. "Concept of the New Woman" The 'New Woman' in Indian English Fiction. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1996.

Trivedi, Harshad. (Eds.) *Shabda Srushtri*. (Monthly) *Naarilekhan Visheshank*. Gandhinagar: Gujarat Sahitya Akademi 2002, Nov.-Dec.